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# Philistine Iconography

A Wealth of Style and Symbolism



Academic Press Fribourg  
Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Göttingen

Published with the assistance of the Institute for Aegean Prehistory, Philadelphia, PA, and the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Internet general catalogue:

Academic Press Fribourg: [www.paulusedition.ch](http://www.paulusedition.ch)

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen: [www.v-r.de](http://www.v-r.de)

Camera-ready text submitted by the author

© 2010 by Academic Press Fribourg, Fribourg Switzerland  
Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Göttingen

ISBN: 978-3-7278-1654-3 (Academic Press Fribourg)

ISBN: 978-3-525-54360-3 (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht)

ISSN: 1015-1850 (Orb. biblicus orient.)

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## Acknowledgements

Much of the material discussed in this work comes from the excavations of Tel Miqne-Ekron directed by Profs. Trude Dothan and Seymour Gitin. A part of this study emerged from my M.A. thesis, which was conducted some years ago under the supervision of Trude Dothan. I wish to thank Trude Dothan and Seymour Gitin for allowing me to process and publish the relevant finds from Tel Miqne-Ekron, and for assisting me in many ways throughout the years. Parts of this study were conducted during 2006–2007 in the framework of an Alexander von Humboldt Foundation postdoctoral fellowship, hosted by the University of Heidelberg. Further work towards the completion of the manuscript was carried out in 2009 during an additional stay of three months, also funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, at the University of Münster. The production of the book was supported by a generous grant from the Institute for Aegean Prehistory (INSTAP). I wish to thank Joseph Maran for his hospitality in Heidelberg, and Rainer Albertz and Rüdiger Schmitt for their hospitality in Münster. Certain portions of this work are being reused from earlier publications courtesy of the American Schools of Oriental Research, the Israel Exploration Society and the Institute of Archaeology, Tel Aviv University. Drawings of the pottery objects from Ekron are by Marina Zeltzer; the figurines were drawn by Helena Bitan and Marina Zeltzer, the ivories by Marina Zeltzer and Pnina Arad, seals and sealings by Marina Zeltzer and Julia Rodman. Illustrations from Ashdod and the photograph of the hedgehog vessel from Ekron are courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority. Drawings of objects from Ashkelon are by Cathy Alexander, Anna Proctor, and Esther Stark; photographs are by Gaby Laron and Zeev Radovan. I wish to thank the directors of the Leon-Levy Expedition to Ashkelon, Lawrence Stager and Daniel Master, for their permission to use several illustrations of finds from the site. Pirhiya Nahshoni of the Israel Antiquities Authority kindly provided information about results from her excavations at Nahal Patish. Amihai Mazar allowed me to use drawings of finds from Tel Qasile. Aren Maeir allowed me to use illustrations of finds from Tell es-Safi/Gath and provided information on yet unpublished finds. Photographs of the Yavneh favissa stands are courtesy of Raz Kletter, Irit Ziffer and the Israel Antiquities Authority; these photographs were taken by Leonid Padrul, Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv. Michael Press has allowed me to use some material from his Ph. D. dissertation. Many colleagues have assisted me in discussions of specific objects or of more general issues; these include Rainer Albertz, Daphna Ben-Tor, Alexandra Drenka, Othmar Keel,

Aren Maeir, Joseph Maran, Stefan Münger, Michael Press, Tallay Ornan, Rüdiger Schmitt, Christoph Uehlinger, Joe Uziel, Melissa Veters, Assaf Yasur-Landau and Irit Ziffer; Joe Uziel assisted in the final editing of the text. My apologies to anyone I have forgotten. I thank the *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* staff and editors, and especially Christoph Uehlinger and Marcia Bodenmann, for their support and assistance.





## Chapter 1

### Introduction: The meaning and significance of iconography in material culture

#### *1.1. Introduction*

The aim of this work is to use the study of iconography towards a better understanding of an archaeologically and historically defined phenomenon: the Philistines. Therefore, this study is conducted within a well defined archaeological framework: the assemblage studied is from the region of Philistia during the Iron Age (ca. 1,200–586 BCE). It is dealt with primarily according to an iconographical methodology, i. e., from an art-historical perspective. Iconography is dealt with in various disciplines, and can have different definitions and interpretations thereof. This is a rather broad study, not focusing on one type of finds and analyzing it with the help of various methods. The aim is to comprehensively examine all aspects of Philistine iconography, and interpret them in their social and cultural framework. Yet, an extensive catalogue of finds is not given, since it will be published in the final excavation reports.

The Philistines and their culture have received much scholarly attention in the past few decades. Philistine material culture was defined and presented during the 1960s (Dothan 1967, 1982); during the subsequent generation, several main Philistine sites were excavated. In the past decade, with new excavations and methods, we have reached a new stage of further analysis now concentrating on Philistine society and its evolutionary aspects (see e. g., Barako 2000; Yasur-Landau 2002, 2003; Ben-Shlomo 2006a; Uziel 2007, and references therein). Regarding evidence from new excavations at the Philistine city sites, much emphasis is still drawn to the Philistine pottery and its various appearances throughout the Iron Age (e.g., Dothan 1982; Killebrew 1998, 2000; Dothan and Zukerman 2006; Ben-Shlomo, Shai and Maeir 2004; Ben-Shlomo 2006a). On the other hand, the ongoing study of iconic representations of the second and first millennia BCE in the southern Levant (e.g., Keel and Uehlinger 1998; Uehlinger 2000; Beck 2002; Ornan 2005; Suter and Uehlinger 2005) did not thoroughly discuss depictions created by the Philistine culture in their own right, and was not fully employed in the comparative study of Philistine iconography. The present study will focus on figurative representations attested in various media in Philistia, or Philistine iconography, a subject that has not yet received extensive attention,

especially in light of the updated archaeological evidence (for certain accounts see Dothan 1982: 198–251; Keel and Uelinger 1998: 122–4, 138–41; Mazar 2000; Yasur-Landau 2001). While several shorter studies dealing with specific object groups that are part of the Philistine iconographic corpus have been published by this and other authors in recent years (Iron Age I ivories, Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006; seals and sealings, Ben-Shlomo 2006c; pomegranate vessels, Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2007; zoomorphic vessels, Ben-Shlomo 2008a; Aegean-style figurines, Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009), the entire evidence is combined into a general picture only in this work.

In Chapter 1 the term ‘iconography’, as it is used in this study, is defined as the pictorial representation of a subject, or, literally, as description of images (or ‘image writing’). Thence, various theoretical approaches to iconography and style in archaeological research are mentioned. The main issues relevant to iconographic studies of the ancient Near East and the southern Levant during the Iron Age in particular are also pointed out, and the role of the Hebrew Bible regarding the description of images is also examined. The main question for this research is probably whether the iconography of Iron Age Philistia (an empirically founded archaeological entity) should indeed be considered ‘*Philistine*’ in its nature. This question relates to both the definition of a ‘Philistine style’ and to that of an iconic-symbolic assemblage that could be considered typical of the Philistines (their symbolism or ‘symbolic world’).

In Chapter 2 the terms ‘Philistine’ and ‘Philistine material culture’ are defined, providing the archaeological background for this study. The archaeological evidence indicates that such definitions have to be employed within the framework of a process in which this region received significant quantities of immigrants from the west (i. e., the Aegean region and/or Cyprus). In the course of the Iron Age an evolving immigrant society interacted with the local Canaanite society, out of which a dynamic culture emerged. A tentative definition of ‘Philistine iconography’ is thence given, with various distinctions of styles, which have certain, rather flexible, cultural-ethnic labels. It is the main aim of this work to examine whether this definition is justified in light of the archaeological evidence of diversified figurative representations; and if so, in what way ‘Philistine iconography’ is attested. Another aspect that will be examined is the diversity and apparently multi-cultural reality expressed by these depictions; we shall ask whether this diversity is part of the ‘Philistine phenomenon’ as well.

The work includes pictorial representations of defined figurative or specific abstract subjects in various media which are represented in Iron Age Philistia’s archaeological record. Chapter 3, the main body of the work, surveys and discusses the archaeological evidence. The main assemblages of artifacts include decoration on pottery, figuratively-shaped pottery vessels, figurines and other terracottas, various depictions in ivory as well as on cylinder and stamp seals and their impressions. The description and discussion is organized according to themes: human, animal, vegetative and geometric

representations. Naturally, more attention will be given to more complex and detailed representations. Apparently, there is a very large body of data that reflects iconographic elements in Iron Age Philistia. While it is impossible to address every item here, an attempt will be made to discuss the main groups of evidence with an emphasis on recently published or previously unpublished material (for example, the material from the more recent excavations in the Philistine cities of Ekron, Ashkelon and Gath). Many of the items discussed below come from the excavations at Tel Miqne-Ekron and Tel Ashdod. In addition, the important finds at a favissa near Yavneh (Ziffer and Kletter 2007) will be discussed as well as other new excavations and the better known from the temples of Tel Qasile (Mazar 1980). An attempt will be made to combine all this evidence towards a better understanding of the material culture of Philistia and of Philistine society. A brief, rather selective survey of the archaeological contexts of the finds will be presented as well as a semi-quantitative summary of the evidence.

In Chapter 4 the issue of Philistine style and its development is reconsidered in light of the entire assemblage. Generally, Philistine iconography of the early stage could be divided stylistically into two groups: depictions reflecting certain Aegean or Cypriot elements, and, thus, basically typical of the immigrant Philistine material culture of the early Iron Age, and other depictions reflecting local or 'Canaanite' affinities, which occur throughout the Iron Age. Later on, there emerges a hybrid or peculiarly Philistine style, which can also be seen as a stylistic development of the first, 'Aegean-style' group. This development can be seen in several categories of Philistine material culture such as the decoration on pottery, female-shaped terracotta and zoomorphic vessels. However, several other categories, like ivories and glyptics, seem to be more conservative, and are not affected much by the Aegean-style iconography; these show local Canaanite and Egyptian traditions. Some other artifacts, such as certain types of terracottas, appear almost entirely in a hybrid or locally developed 'Philistine style'. During the Iron Age II (ca. 1,000–586 BCE) there is a decrease in the iconographic representations that illustrate clear Aegean characteristics, yet a Philistine style is still apparent. Moreover, there seems to be a more intensified representation of various figurative depictions of the Canaanite tradition in this period in Philistia in comparison to some other regions of the southern Levant. This latter phenomenon is possibly one of the characteristics of the Philistine iconographic material culture of the late Iron Age I and Iron Age II periods.

The meaning and significance of the Philistine iconographic representations will also be discussed. It will be shown that different representations appear in domestic and in public or temple contexts. An attempt to explain this difference, also in the light of an evolving immigrant society within a local Canaanite hosting population is made. Iconography can be considered as a reflection of a peculiar cultural and ideological syntax, or as a certain type of language of the people producing the image-bearing objects. Pictorial representations would naturally be sensitive to social, ethnic and

ideological aspects. Ethnic boundaries as well are maintained largely through symbols (e.g., McGuire 1982: 161; Hodder 1982a: 58–86). It will be shown that some pictorial themes can be viewed as typically Philistine; the connection of these themes and other types of objects and depictions to religious and ethnic symbolism will be reexamined as well.

### *1.2. Definitions of iconography*

Iconography can be defined formally in several ways as it is dealt with in various disciplines such as linguistics, art history, religious studies, archaeology, psychology and sociology. As taken from the Webster Dictionary the definition is: 1. Pictorial material relating to or illustrating a subject. 2. The traditional or conventional images or symbols associated with a subject and especially a religious or legendary subject. 3. The imagery or symbolism of a work of art, an artist, or a body of art. Nos. 2 and 3 can be combined into one general meaning, i. e.: a set of specified or traditional symbolic forms associated with the subject or theme of a stylized work of art; or, the images and symbolic representations that are traditionally associated with a person or a subject. Iconology is defined as the study of images.

From the *Encyclopedia of Religion* (Eliade 2001–2006) the definition is more confined: Iconography literally means ‘description of images’, but it also refers to a research program in art history that exposes the different meanings of images *vis-à-vis* the beholder. Religious iconography defines a relationship between symbols and religious themes and ideas. In art history iconography is the branch of art history which studies the identification, description, and the interpretation of the content of images (see e. g., Carrier 1991). Images in turn can be defined as (in our case)<sup>1</sup> material representations of objects. It has been suggested, that as images, basically, represent the ‘absent’ or are a certain substitute for an object, the origin of imagery was in the cult of the dead (Belting 2001, 2005).

In archaeology iconography can be considered as a representation of a culturally determined symbol system, or as a certain type of (pictorial) language of the people producing objects displaying iconographic features (e.g., Schmidt 1996; Keel and Uehlinger 1998; Bahrani 2005: 53; Lesure 2005; Ornan 2005: 8–9; Weissenrieder and Wendt 2005). Iconography can convey a religious or other symbolism or message(s), reflecting both the background of the person creating an image-bearing artifact and the recipients of it. In relation to religious or power symbols images can be even more strict and formalized than the written word (see, Keel and Uehlinger 1998; Ornan 2005: 9–10), since in the ancient Near East an image was viewed and

<sup>1</sup> Non-material images include mental images (thoughts, dreams), verbal images and, more recently, virtual electronic images.

understood by all, or many, while texts were viewed and understood only by few. In the case of lack of written texts of various forms, iconography can be the only aspect of material culture which clearly conveys an explicit communicative message, which might be comparable in some aspects to writing. In this sense, the literal definition of iconography, as description of images or 'image writing' (*icono-graphy*), is most fitting. In this study, we will define iconography simply as the pictorial or figurative representation of a subject.

### *1.3. Iconography in archaeology: practice and theory*

The treatment of iconography in archaeological research and study of ancient material culture is very common; yet, until recent decades, only few methodological discussions were conducted on this subject. As archaeological research aims to interpret the past according to material evidence, the issue of iconographic and symbolic (i.e. the use of symbols to represent ideas or emotions) analysis and interpretation can be problematic, especially in prehistoric cultures that lack written evidence (Binford 1962; Robb 1998). Or, as pronounced by Hawkes in his famous 'ladder of inference': "Without written texts, archaeologists can investigate economy readily, and political and social systems to a lesser extent, but for the most part, prehistoric symbols and ideas must remain a closed book" (Hawkes 1954). This can create a certain paradox, as, while anything symbolic in a culture cannot be understood without texts, albeit, within a human culture, basically everything is symbolic in some way (Robb 1998: 331). In a similar way a gap between style and function can evolve to a dichotomy in archaeological interpretations, similarly to a materialist/idealist tension (see David 1990; Cunningham 2003: 34; while Dietler and Herbich 1998 add the technological aspect to this). In art history an opposition of form and content is also assumed (Summers 1989: 372–9).

Nevertheless, most archaeologists eventually do stray to iconographic analysis at certain points of their research. In many archaeological studies the issue of iconography is treated in a descriptive and comparative method, similarly to the analysis of other aspects of material culture. Often, as a further analysis, drawn from the framework of the discipline of art history, a detailed stylistic analysis is conducted. In most cases methods of art history are followed, especially as framed by Panofsky (1939; 1955; see, e.g. Robb 1998 for discussion). His methods include three levels of analyses: style/pre-iconographical, iconographical, and iconological (see below). Certain studies focus on iconographic analysis (for the Near East and the Levant see, e. g., Ucko 1968; Uehlinger 2000; Beck 2002; Moorey 2003; Ornan 2005; for Iron Age Europe, e.g., Aldhouse-Green 2004). Art historian analysis usually deals with the aspects of symbol and style: exploring what the representations depict (the symbolic or iconographic aspect) and how they

are depicted (style) (see, e. g., Panofsky 1955: 26–54, and for more general reviews, e. g., Carrier 1991; Kemal and Gaskell 1991).

Therefore, this field comprises two categories: 1. Iconography (or iconology): the study of what the representations depict, i. e., what is the object or theme of the subject depicted (Panofsky 1955; Roskill, 1989: 94–8). 2. Stylistic analysis: describing in what way the object is depicted (e. g., Conkey and Hastorf 1990); this usually leads to comparative analysis as the focus of stylistic analysis is on relations between objects. Or: “What we identify as a ‘style’ is our attempt to represent discursively certain intuitive processes prompted by confronting a series of similar objects. That which makes the objects similar we call ‘style’ and we assert that it had some saliency in the lives of the original makers of the objects” (Lesure 2005: 244).<sup>2</sup> In archaeological studies style can have various further implications, as reflecting cultural differences, chronological differences, ethnicity, status, and socio-economic differences, possibly not attested by other evidences (e. g., Hodder 1990; Sackett 1990; Bahrani 2005). Note, that in this study the term ‘iconography’ in fact comprises both aspects of symbolic iconography and style analysis.

During the 1960s and onwards the ‘structuralistic’ approach (e. g., Lévi-Strauss 1958, 1973) was increasingly applied towards the analysis of images and symbols in archaeological research (e. g., Munn 1966; Hodder 1982a: 142–84; Hodder 1982b; Ucko 1996; Schaan 1997). This approach relates to images as reflecting psychological perceptions or thoughts defining reality (thus, the symbols themselves create reality in a certain way). In relation to this approach the field of semiotics can be used as an analytic framework for the embodiment of myths and ideas in objects (Damisch 1975; Aldhouse-Green 2004: 1–28). Semiotics deal with the usage of signs, also in art history (where they are also theorized as ‘pictorial semiotics’; see Hasenmueller 1978; Bal and Bryson 1991). The structural approach emphasized the need to analyze abstract iconography in archaeology as well, and not only anthropomorphic, zoomorphic or other figurative depictions (see, e.g., Schaan 2001; Schaan 2004: 357–80; Lesure 2005). Such a methodology was applied, for example, to the collection of Marajoara pottery from the Brazilian Amazon, ca. 1,000 AD (Schaan 1997; Schaan 2001; Schaan 2004: 357–80). Schaan’s studies were concerned with searching for structural motifs (schematization of a more naturalistic motif); in this case the snake which relates to the religion and mythology of the people was identified. Snakes are presented as a schematic abstract motif, not naturalistic in most cases (Schaan 2004: 357–80), while different iconography is used for funerary items: i. e., schematic abstract human depictions. In this context

<sup>2</sup> Yet, it should be remembered that some art history tools are not of great concern from an archaeologist’s standpoint (see Damisch 1975; Summers 1989; Lesure 2005: 245); for instance, evolutionary connotations of style, problems relating form to the ‘genius’ of individuals or peoples, and the role of the art market in the scholarly creation of styles.



iconography can indeed become a language, in the same way script develops from pictograph signs to abstract signs (see, e. g., Goldwasser 1995, for the Egyptian example).

In the past few decades in particular new theories have been employed in the study of iconography and symbolism in ancient material culture; these are often associated with processual and post-processual approaches in archaeology (Robb 1998; Lesure 2005). Robb and Lesure have evaluated the prospects of iconographic and symbolic research in archaeology in light of these theories. The processual approach treated symbols as describing reality; thus, reality creates the symbols; this can clash with the structuralist view by which, as noted, symbols define reality. However, in post-modernist views the treatment of symbols is less straightforward and well defined (Robb 1998: 334). Symbols can be arbitrary fragments of human thought; symbols are conveying meanings but how and when ideology will be deployed in material items is not clear and cannot be predicted (DeMarrais et al. 1996: 16). Thus, possibly, symbols cannot be seen as 'tokens', as they not only represent power, gender identity and culture (for example) but can also constitute them. Therefore, the analysis and interpretation of iconography and symbols should reach beyond explanation of the symbol itself, towards the understanding of the mechanism by which the symbols affect society (Robb 1998: 334). Robb has defined symbols (in a 'post-structuralist' view) as 'girders', constituting a 'Mental Reality Approach' (Robb 1998: 335–8); symbols are thus perceived as cultural structures or as *tesserae*. Yet, where archaeology and the actual analysis and interpretation of material culture are concerned, this view is open to serious criticism, and may hardly be effective for real use in research. The meaning of images and symbols in actual culture is not fixed but is contestable and flexible (Robb 1998: 338). As we know from both archaeology and anthropology the meaning of symbols depends on the way in which the symbols were used and on their context (which brings us back to contextual archaeology).

Therefore, Robb suggests that it is better to integrate all of these approaches to analyze symbols, as there is no single way to 'decode' symbols, rather several questions should be asked regarding symbols in each case. Some basic points of study are as follows (Robb 1998: 339–41): iconic or representational meaning of symbols; structural or relational meaning of symbols; phenomenological or experiential meaning of symbols; grammars and variations of form, technique, and decoration; cross-artifact styles; social connotations and associations of artifacts, representations, and styles; technical analysis of techniques of manufacture and use wear; economic aspects of artifact manufacture and circulation; knowledge and execution of artifact manufacture as a cultural process; artifact life histories from manufacture through deposition; context of usage and interpretation; knowledge differentials and layers of interpretation among users of artifacts; and ambiguity, multiplicity of interpretations, misunderstanding, and irony. These aspects could of course be further examined if textual evidence is relevant. Therefore, symbolism

that crosses between artifacts is more meaningful (Robb 1998: 341), and apparently many methods of descriptive and comparative conventional archaeology and art history are more effective for the treatment of symbols and iconography, especially in a complex and dynamic cognitive and social reality. Thence, indeed, the study of iconography in archaeology is to a certain extent practice first and theory later.

Lesure (2005) has basically reached similar conclusions. Theories of embodiment of human thought in objects and pursuing ‘agency’ in archaeology do not alone lead to a better understanding of symbolism: “Whether we begin with embodiment and take up imagery to further our theoretical agenda or, instead, start with some collection of representations and seize on embodiment as an interpretive tool, we run into the same question: how is theory to be convincingly linked to evidence?” (Lesure 2005: 238). Therefore, notwithstanding these various theories, we can go back to art history analysis tools of description and classification of iconographic elements, and stylistic and comparative analysis (and possibly move forward consequently). More specifically, Lesure (2005: 249–53) brings an example of the interpretation of anthropomorphic imagery, as this is a good example for how humans have imaged themselves. The example given relates to Mesoamerican figurines, showing both male and female; however, those with a different style of eyes are singled out and it is concluded that they depict people with masks. In this way we can understand through stylistic-iconographic analysis the manner in which people perceived themselves and used symbols. Similar approaches of more flexible art history methods will be attempted in this study as well. Recently, the term ‘visual culture’ has also been used in art studies and other disciplines, as well as in archaeology to describe iconographic representations (e.g., Mirzoeff 1999; Plate 2002). Yet, employing this term for iconographic representations in archaeological research may be confusing as *all* material culture is basically ‘visual culture’.

#### *1.4. Iconography as a language*

The introduction of semiotics into iconographic analysis can facilitate the treatment of iconography as a type of language. In this context iconography has become an important tool used also by the disciplines of bible and religious studies and theology (e.g., Keel 1978; Keel and Uehlinger 1998; Kletter 2001), as well as social and gender studies (e.g., Schroer 2006). Images are seen as illuminating and complementing the texts, and conveying messages that cannot be verbally transmitted (e.g., Weissenrieder and Wendt 2005). Panofsky’s (1939; 1955) principles of iconographic analysis which include description, analysis and interpretation, can thus be employed for the study of the archaeological artifacts that carry iconographic representations. These three levels of treatment can in turn reveal different aspects of the artifacts and the society creating and using them:



1. the forming and styling of the iconographic representation (this aspect is affected by technological considerations that are dictated by the media the object is made of, the technology used and the degree of skill or craftsmanship); 2. the symbol or theme the representation illustrates; 3. the function of the object within the context of the people that created and used it. These layers are actually a spinoff of Panofsky's method of iconographic analysis (Panofsky 1955: 28–39) which describes three levels of analysis: first, forming of the motif – the description (which is already an initial interpretation, Panofsky 1939: 16–17); then, connecting the motif to an image or idea – identifying the icon; and finally, examining the meaning of the image towards conveying an idea or ideology expressed by the artist – analyzing the 'iconology' (see, also Kelley 1995; also, Press 2007: 86–72, for application of this method on Ashkelon figurines).

When dealing with archaeological material it is especially important to define the extent of a specific iconographic representation on a given object. The iconographic depictions themselves can illustrate various degrees of 'representation scale' (which is also highly dependent on the preservation of the artifact). The largest would be a more complex narrative which could include a composition of scenes (see e.g., Stansbury-O'Donnell 1999 for narrative analysis of Greek painted vases). This is quite rare in our assemblage (a krater from Ashkelon, fig. 3.12, an ivory box from Tell el-Far'ah (S), fig. 3.46 and possibly few of the Yavneh stands, figs. 3.24–3.29). In the next level there is a representation of a single scene, which is composed of several figures or images (such as the 'Musicians' stand' from Ashdod, fig. 3.18, or the swimmers ivory from Ekron, fig. 3.43). On a lower scale there is a depiction of a single figure or image, or a collection of these (this is quite common in the archaeological record). On an even lower scale, there is a depiction of the motif, which can be a sub-unit of an image, and in the lowest level there is a fragmentary depiction of a figure, image or motif. It is hoped that important insights will be drawn from the comparison of the various levels and scales of representations in the iconographic assemblage of Philistia within itself, as well as through comparative assemblages.

Similar to linguistic entities (words, phrases, texts, ...), iconographic representations can have various meanings which are determined by the context in which they are found. It should be taken into consideration that the more general a representation is, the wider the meaning or communicative value range may be. In fact, when devoid of its context, which often occurs in actual excavation, representations are practically almost stripped from their specific meaning, and can only be very generally and universally interpreted. Yet, if the representation is more narrowly defined, i.e., stylistically detailed, and figuratively explicit (like a less common word) it will have a narrow meaning range, and thence can be interpreted on more occasions, even without context.

For this reason, the interpretation of more schematic and universal images is more problematic. Regarding style, the issue of schematization of figura-

tive motifs in material culture is described rather than explained in most studies (e.g., Munn 1966; Schaan 1997; Lesure 2005; Ucko 1996; see, e.g., Hasenmueller 1978 for art history approaches). Possibly, the schematization could be in some cases a transition into more linguistic or script-like communicative strategies. Nevertheless, it is very likely that this process may be very culture-specific, and thus, difficult to interpret. In the case of the Near Eastern iconography during the Iron Age, it has also been suggested that a trend of transition into a more symbolized-schematic iconography occurred in relation to certain political and religious ideologies (e.g., Keel and Uehlinger 1998; Ornan 2004, 2005).

### *1.5. Iconography in the ancient Near East and in the Hebrew Bible*

In the following section, the role of iconography in the ancient Near East, especially in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> millennia BCE will be examined, although this study does not attempt to treat this subject in any detail or depth. As this is a vast topic with very extensive literature dealing with the disciplines of Near Eastern studies, art history, archaeology and bible studies, only several issues that are directly relevant to this study will be shortly mentioned. It is suffice to note that diverse iconographic representations in the ancient Near East in general and in the southern Levant in particular occur in varied forms and have assorted functions throughout the Bronze and Iron Ages (see, e.g., for the Levant, Keel and Uehlinger 1998; Uehlinger 2000; Beck 2002; Cornelius 2004, 2008; Webb 1999 for Cyprus). These appear in a variety of media: figurative pottery and pottery decoration, glyptic and ivory carving on the smaller scale objects; and stone statues and reliefs on the more monumental scale ones.

Monumental depictions usually represent the gods and kings; smaller scale representations are often a spinoff of the larger ones, yet these have their own assemblage of motifs, frequently depicting more realistic themes (Ornan 2005: 6–7). In general, iconography is strongly related to the sphere of cult, religion and manipulation of power, especially in the fields of Near Eastern art studies (e.g. Schmitt 2001; Suter and Uehlinger 2005; Feldman and Heinz 2007), and often, deals with monumental depictions of deities and royalties, but also occurs in glyptics, which are miniature depictions (e.g., Keel and Uehlinger 1998; Ornan 1995, 2005). Such iconographic representations would also be more sensitive to social, ethnic and ideological aspects of a given society (Hodder 1982a: 58–86; McGuire 1982; Bahrani 2003; Bahrani 2005: 52–3; Lesure 2005). Yet, from an archaeological point of view, the relationship between specific iconographic objects should be examined according to each case separately, primarily with regard to the archaeological context of the find. This is especially true for smaller objects, often crudely made, usually from cheap materials, such as clay (i.e. figurines).

The depiction of deities and royalties in these representations are rarer, and the scenes are usually more realistic and convey daily life experiences; alternatively, they can be associated with various aspects of popular cult. In fact, the amount of literature dealing with these types of depictions is significantly less. As of yet, the treatment of monumental representations is hardly relevant to the study of iconography in Philistia. Therefore, representations that occur in Philistia, whether human, animal or in other form, can also represent other non-cultic functions, such as decorative functional domestic items or toys. And even when they are connected with some symbolic beliefs of cultic practices, these might be very informal, individual, and have a weaker link to other evidence from texts and accounts of formal religion and mythology. The relationships between the iconographic representations and cultic practices, the depiction of deities and religious beliefs and ideology is better examined only after the material and its context have been presented (i.e., in Chapter 4). Similarly, the possible link between iconographic depictions and ethnic identity or other ideologies (e.g., Bahrani 2005: 53–6, also as creating boundaries, McGuire 1982; Hodder 1982a: 58–86) should also be examined in relation to the entire assemblage.

On the other hand, the Hebrew Bible promotes an *aniconism*, at least in relation to the figurative portrayal of gods (or even any human figurative depictions), and forbids these depictions (see, e.g., Mettinger 1995: 39–56; Mettinger 1997; Van der Toorn 1997; Hendel 1997). The figurative depiction of gods is replaced in the West-Semitic world by standing stones or ‘empty space’ (Mettinger 1995: 18–20, 100–103; Hendel 1997: 224). The real state of affairs in the southern Levant, at least until the late Iron Age II, indicates, however, the presence of many figurative depictions in various media, also of figurative gods, both male and female (e.g., Uehlinger 1997; Van der Toorn 2002; Cornelius 2008); yet, monumental representations are rather rare.

Ornan suggested that the analysis of Mesopotamian imagery from the mid-second to mid-first millennium BCE demonstrates that Mesopotamian gods and goddesses with anthropomorphic form (according to the rich textual evidence) were not visualized as such in various media (Ornan 2004; Ornan 2005: 168–72). While human-shaped, divine, cultic images existed in Mesopotamian temples, outside these locations these deities were portrayed by non-anthropomorphic visual images such as inanimate objects, animals, or fantastic hybrids. This tendency reached its peak in first-millennium Babylonia and Assyria. Such a custom is possibly in contradiction with the multiple representations appearing in Canaanite-Levantine and Egyptian iconography. This tendency resembles the aniconism ideology of the Hebrew Bible, and probably influenced it (Ornan 2005: 175–8). Ornan further suggests that both the Assyro-Babylonian and biblical concepts of the gods were equally perceived as having a dual representation or incarnation: a human and non-human one, as in animals, plants and other emblems (Ornan 2005: 115–67, 172–82). Yet, it should be realized that the appearance of a specific emblem representing a certain god (say a bull) cannot automatically indicate

that this god is represented, as the necessary composition related to it must also be represented (i.e., compare a single ibex, that may not be a religious symbol, to two ibexes flanking a palm tree, which is a typical Mesopotamian and Levantine religious symbol symbolizing various deities [Ornan 2005: 155–9]). It is when the Judahite deportees spent time in Babylon that they adopted and intensified the Mesopotamian avoidance of anthropomorphic pictorial portrayals of deities (Ornan 2005: 179–82), as a reactionary view towards Canaanite and Egyptian customs. While such a trend was suggested by Ornan for Iron Age glyptics (Ornan 1995), is it also relevant to the depiction of images on small, non-monumental objects in Philistia? Monumental depictions of Philistine gods have not been found, but are mentioned in the story of the Ark (the fall of the statue of Dagon in the Ashdod temple, 1 Sam. 5:4) and may be seen in Assyrian depictions as well (see below).

Biblical evidence as well as archaeological finds from the Iron Age Levant, including Judah, indicate an extensive use of iconographic objects (e.g., Ptitchard 1943; Meyers 1988; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 57–60; 2005; Van der Toorn 2002), in relation to both official and popular religion, including, as noted above, substantial appearances of anthropomorphic representations (see, e.g., Uehlinger 1997). Some of these were probably idols used in domestic cult and religion both in Israel and other areas of the southern Levant (see e.g., Milgrom 1998; Van der Toorn 2002; Moorey 2003: 1–15). Many female depictions were probably associated with the cult of the *Asherah* (see very extensive literature, e.g., Olyan 1988; Hadley 2000; Kletter 2001). The term *Teraphim*, for example, probably denotes some of these common domestic items, so vividly described in the biblical narrative of Rachel stealing the *Teraphim* from Laban (Gen. 31, see also Greenberg 1962; 1 Sam. 19:13). Apparently, the Hebrew Bible sees these objects as more related to women (possibly because of their function in female ritual practices – e.g., Van der Toorn 2002: 53–8; Meyers 2005; Paz 2007; these are also frequently interpreted as reflecting an ancestors' cult). In another story of Micah and the Danites (Judg. 17–18), *Teraphim* are mentioned as part of a cultic set of objects including a statue and mask (*pesel* and *masecha*, and an *ephod* garment). Note, that the commandments forbid the making of any statute or image of god (Exod. 20:4, Deut. 5:8), yet, *Teraphim* are not mentioned therein (though, see, 2 Kings 23:24). Possibly, the Judahite religion regarded the more domestic practices associated with these objects more leniently. Furthermore, we do not know what the treatment of other iconographic representations was, which were not related to the official religion, or to any cultic symbolism (see Van der Toorn 2002: 49). The story of the golden calf deals directly with the fabrication of an iconographic representation (Exod. 32); the technique of casting is probably described (Exod. 32:4), and this is clearly an object of worship (and thus more strongly condemned; see also the calf of Bethel, 1 Kings 12:28, and the bronze serpent, 2 Kings 18:4, Joines 1968). Another relevant passage is the mention of the Philistines making gold images of mice and *ophalim* in the story of the capture of the

Ark (1 Sam. 6:4–5, see Maeir 2007). Therefore, we do have a number of textual sources relating to a certain iconography (differing from the prehistoric assemblages described above); yet, these texts probably deal with a very narrow group of objects and depictions, and cannot fully clarify most representations appearing in the archaeological record. Moreover, while the biblical text focuses on the iconic or rather aniconic nature of the Israelite religion and daily practices, it is not interested at all with those of the Philistine (or Canaanite for that matter) society. Thus, on the one hand we have these texts in the background of the stylistic and symbolic research, but the constraints mentioned above may give us more of a ‘free hand’ with analysis and interpretation. We can see Iron Age Philistia as an arena in which several ethnic or cultural entities compete: the Philistines, with their Aegean background, the Canaanites, continuing the Late Bronze Age Levantine culture, the Israelites with their new ideology, and the Egyptians, with their variable influences on the southern Levant throughout the Late Bronze and Iron Ages. In this dynamic environment the iconographic representations should be even more carefully examined, as they can hopefully also shed some light on the interactions between these different societies.

## Chapter 2

### Defining Philistine Iron Age material culture and Philistine iconography

#### *2.1. Philistia during the Iron Age and the Philistine material culture*

##### *2.1.1. Geographical definition*

The region of Philistia is geographically defined here as the coastal strip and inner coastal plains lying between Nahal Gerar or Wadi el 'Arish in the southwest<sup>3</sup> and the Yarkon River in the north (including the area in the vicinity of its northern bank). The region is 70 km long and about 27 km wide in the south, narrowing to 15 km in the north (fig. 2.1). While the western boundary is well defined by the Mediterranean Sea, the eastern boundary of the region is less clear, especially in the south. It can be topographically defined as the area west of the foothills of the Judean Shephelah.

Three of the major Philistine cities, Ashdod, Ashkelon and Gaza, are located in the coastal strip itself, directly on or several km from the Mediterranean Sea, with the other two cities – Tel Mique-Ekron and Tell es-Safi/Gath – located inland, on the border between the Shephelah and the inner coastal plain. Tel Mique-Ekron (henceforth, Ekron) is just west of the border between the inner plains and the Shephelah and Tell es-Safi/Gath (henceforth, Gath) is just east of it, already bordering the Shephelah. The region of Philistia can also be roughly divided to northern Philistia (Ashdod and northward, including Ekron) and southern Philistia (the area of Ashkelon and Gaza on the coast and Gath inland).

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<sup>3</sup> The geographic and political border of Philistia in the south is not completely clear. It should be noted that Philistine pottery was found as south as Tell Abu ez-Zuweyid in northern Sinai (Petrie 1937: pls. XXXI:23,32,36, XXXIII:23u; Dothan 1982: 25). Generally, Philistia is often defined according to the political borders mentioned in the bible in relation to the Philistines (Dothan 1982: 16–17), and not defined in strictly geographical terms. The political boundary of Gaza under the Assyrians may have been just south of the city (see Na'aman 2004: 60–4). Several recent excavations in the northwestern Negev have also unearthed various elements of Philistine material culture (see, e.g., Lehmann and Niemann 2008; Nahshoni 2009).

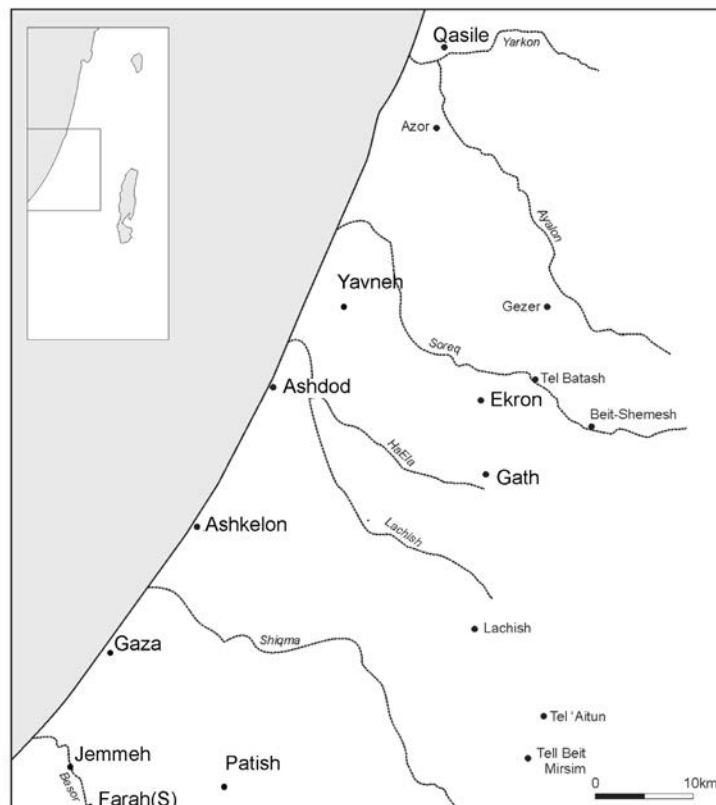


Figure 2.1. Map of Philistia.

### 2.1.2. Literary evidence of the Philistines

Ancient literary evidence on the Philistines includes biblical narratives and external sources, and will only be briefly mentioned here. Most of the biblical narratives that mention the Philistines are found in the books of Judges and Samuel and seem to mostly describe the Iron Age I, traditionally associated with the period of the Judges and early monarchy. Both the nature of the stories and the lack of relevant external textual sources pose many questions regarding their historicity. However, they may be possibly used to reconstruct some of the history of Philistia during the Iron Age IIA or later (see, B. Mazar 1986: 63–82; Ehrlich 1996: 24–56; Machinist 2000). The Philistines are described as originating from the sea or as an Aegean/Cretan entity from *Caphtor/Caphtorim*, on several occasions (as Gen. 10:14, Jer. 47:4, Amos 9:7). The land of the Philistines is located in the southern coastal plain, often described as a ‘buffer zone’ between Egypt and Canaan (Gen. 21:32; Exod. 13:17; Josh. 13:2–3 with all the five Philistine cities mentioned).



The Philistine cities are often mentioned in the books of Judges, Samuel and Kings in relation to their conflicts with the Israelites. On other occasions they are described together with the other peoples of Canaan (Judg. 3:3; together with Ammonites: Judg. 10:11). The story of Samson (Judg. 15–16) reveals many details about the Philistines: their center is Gaza, where the Dagon temple is located, with its architectural description matching that of an Aegean Megaron with two supporting pillars in the entrance (Judg. 16:29). The term *Sarnei Plishtim* (סרני פלשתים) is often mentioned, possibly referring to the leaders or officers (and which may be related to the Greek word *Tiranos*). The market at Ashkelon is mentioned (2 Sam. 1:20), alluding to its importance as a commercial center. The Philistines evidently bring the Ark to the Dagon Temple in Ashdod (1 Sam. 5).<sup>4</sup> Ba'al Zebub is mentioned as the deity of Ekron (2 Kings 1:2–3). In a later list Ekron is noted as a city in the northern frontier of Judah (Josh. 1:18, 15:11). Gath is mentioned as the hometown of Goliath (1 Sam. 11), and was possibly the strongest Philistine city at a certain time. Achish king of Gath is mentioned in David's time (1 Sam. 27:2).

During the late 13<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE several Egyptian literary sources comprise the primary, non-biblical, historical source for the Philistines and the other 'Sea Peoples' (see, e.g., Dothan 1982: 1–13; Singer 1988, and references therein). The *Pršt* (Philistines), and *Tjekker* are first mentioned as invaders in text of Ramesses III (see below), while in a letter to Ugarit, the king of Alashiya advises Hamurapi of Ugarit to prepare his army against the *Sherden*, who are arriving from the sea (Yon 1992: 115). Dating to the 8<sup>th</sup> year of Ramesses III (1184–1153 BCE – low chronology), the Medinet Habu reliefs and their related inscriptions are the most informative source concerning the Sea Peoples both visually and textually (see, e.g., Dothan 1982: 5–13; and below, fig. 3.50). The Sea Peoples are described as coming by land and sea after destroying Alashiya and Hatti and reaching Carchemish. Civilians arrive alongside the armies, as noted by the presence of women and children in carts in the reliefs (see Sweeney and Yasur-Landau 1999). Papyrus Harris I, dated to the end of Ramesses III's reign, states that the Sea Peoples were settled in strongholds in Egyptian controlled areas. The *Onomastikon* of Amenope mentions the Sea peoples together with the Philistine cities.

There is a relative gap in textual sources between the late 11<sup>th</sup> through to the early 8<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE (see, Ehrlich 1996; Shai 2006). Most Iron Age II external texts dealing directly with the Philistine 'city states' are dated to the 8<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> centuries and relate to the Assyrian rule in Philistia, which began after Tiglath-pileser III's campaign in 734 BCE (Tadmor 1966). The absence of Philistia from Iron Age II Egyptian sources may indicate that the Philistines cities preserved a degree of independence under the Assyrian rule as tribute-

<sup>4</sup> Interestingly a Dagon temple at Ashdod is supposedly burned by Jonathan the Hashmonean some 600 years later! (Macc. 10:77–78).



bearing states. The trade between the Philistine cities (Gaza, Ashkelon and Ashdod), the southern Egyptian delta and the northern Phoenician ports (as Byblos, Arvad, Tyre and Sidon) probably benefited Assyrian interests (Tadmor 1966: 87–8; Master 2003: 49–51; Stager 2006a: 16–7). The participation of the Philistine cities in campaigns against Judah or in revolts against Assyria is minimal during the initial years of the Assyrian rule. During the reign of Sargon II there were several rebellions against Assyria, probably aided by Egypt. In 722/721 BCE king Hanun of Gaza joined such a rebellion with other cities, however it was suppressed by Sargon in 720 BCE. The siege of Ekron by Sargon II is depicted on his palace walls at Dur-Sharukkin. In 712 BCE *Yamani* took the throne of the king of Ashdod and revolted against the Assyrians. *Yamani* is mentioned as a ‘Greek’, as hinted to by his name, which is reminiscent of the term Greek in Semitic languages. In retaliation, Sargon II attacked the city in 712, leaving a basalt victory stele (Dothan 1971: 192–7). In the annals of Sennacherib, Ashdod, Gaza and Ekron are mentioned; in the latter, the Assyrian king reinstated the original King *Padi* subsequent to a local revolt. It seems that Philistine independence was preserved to some degree, with the region acting as a buffer zone between Assyria and Egypt, and with the former even transferring territory from Judah to them (Tadmor 1966: 97). Historical evidence from the Iron Age IIC includes texts from the reigns of Sennacherib, Essarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal (Pritchard 1969: 287, 291, 294), which mention Ashdod and Ekron. The royal inscription from Ekron is of primary importance (Gitin, Dothan and Naveh 1997; Gitin 2003: 284–6, fig. 3); it reads: “The house (which) Akhayush (Ikausu/Achish), son of Padi, son of Ysd, son of Ada, son of Ya’ir, ruler (*sar* סר) of Ekron, built for Pythogaia (*Ptgyh*), his lady. May she bless him, and protect him, and prolong his days, and bless his land.”

In the year 604 BCE, the Philistine cities of Ashdod, Ekron, Ashkelon and Gaza were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (Gath had already ceased to exist – see, e.g. Uziel and Maeir 2005). During the Persian and Hellenistic periods, Philistia was probably still viewed as a geo-political entity, although the Philistines as a people ceased to exist. Settlements near Nippur were probably named after Gaza (*Hasatu*) and Ashkelon (*Iskalanu*) as they were populated by refugees from Philistia (Zadok 1978: 61).

### 2.1.3. Archaeological evidence from the Philistine cities

Because of its dense population and complicated political position, Gaza has yet to be extensively excavated, with the Iron Age levels only known from probes (Burdajewicz 2000); thus, archaeological evidence is limited to the other four Philistine sites – Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron and Gath.

### 2.1.3.1. *Ashdod*

Tel Ashdod is located in the industrial zone south of the modern city of Ashdod, 4.5 km east of the shoreline (map reference 118.129) near one of the tributaries of Nahal Lachish (with its ancient port probably located in one of the nearby sites of Tel Mor or Ashdod Yam). The tell is about 340–360 dunam (34–36 hectares) in size, with an upper tell of 8 hectares. Seven seasons of excavations were conducted between the years of 1962–1972, on behalf of the Israel Departments of Antiquities and the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh. The excavations were directed by M. Dothan, D.N. Freedman and J. Swager. In total 6,500 sq.m. were excavated in the eight main excavation areas (A, B, C, D, G, H, K and M) and several smaller sections (E, F). This was the first time a Philistine city was systematically excavated. The identification of the site was not questionable, as the Arab village *Isdud* retained the name of the ancient city.

Iron Age I remains were uncovered in Areas A, C, G, H and possibly B and K, however these were very fragmentary and unclear, other than in Areas G and H (Dothan 1971: 25–31). In Area H the sophisticated layout of the buildings and the rich finds in Strata XIII–XI (see table 1) seem to allude to the prosperity of the Philistine dwellings there (Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: plans 2.5–2.7, figs. 2.18–2.25). Most of the Iron Age I settlement (Strata XIII–XI) was located on the acropolis and its slopes, expanding to the east towards the beginning of Iron Age IIA (Strata X–IX): a massive wall and gate were erected during this period in Area M (Stratum Xb: Dothan and Porath 1982). In Area G, Strata XIIIb–a, a series of small rooms adjacent to a casemate wall or a thickened wall construction were uncovered, and yielded Philistine Monochrome pottery. Stratum XII, producing both Philistine Monochrome and Bichrome pottery, was better exposed both in Areas G and H, preserving complete buildings and floor levels, and representing two phases. In Area G a courtyard house adjacent to the possible casemate wall was discovered. The courtyard (hall?) included a clay tub and a ‘fire installation’ (Dothan and Porath 1993: 70–2, plan 10, pls. 22–3).

In Area H, Stratum XIII displays a well-planned city comprising two main blocks of structures facing a main street, which ran along the western slope of the tell. The general plan of Areas H and K is preserved throughout the Iron Age (see Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: plans 1.2–3). The general layout of the buildings in Area H Stratum XII is comprised of a large courtyard and a unique apsidal structure located inside the courtyard (Dothan 1971: 159, plan 21; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: plan 2.5, figs. 2.15–2.16). The other building (5337) is a pillared hall flanked by rooms on either side. This building yielded a rich assemblage of small finds including figurines, gold objects, ivories, jewelry and scarabs (Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 26–8, plans 2.6–2.7). The building excavated south of the street (5128) was of a similar plan, although furnished less affluently. The subsequent (and last) Iron I settlement is that of Stratum XI, sub-divided into XIb and XIa; it

yielded large amounts of Philistine Bichrome pottery. Stratum XIb included more substantial remains than Stratum XIa, where an architectural decline seems to take place (Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: plans 2.8–2.9). On the eroded western edge of the excavated area, a fragment of a massive wall was uncovered, possibly part of a city wall that went out of use in Stratum XIa. Iron Age II city walls were revealed in Ashdod both in Area G, Stratum X (Dothan 1971:136; Dothan and Porath 1993: 92) and in Area M, Strata X–VII (Dothan and Porath 1982).

During the Iron Age IIA and IIB (Strata IX–VII) Ashdod became a larger and probably more important city. The city is expanded and fortified, as the remains in Area M show. During the 8<sup>th</sup> century it reaches its peak, with remains of an industrial potter's quarter and a possible cultic area in the southern lower city (Area D). This area was destroyed during the late 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE, probably during Sargon II's campaign in 712 BCE (Dothan and Freedman 1967: 130–36; Dothan 1971: 86–92), with evidence of mass burials recorded by the excavators. According to recent salvage excavations north of the tell, during this period an impressive fortress or palace of Assyrian style was built (Kogan-Zehavi 2006). A sequence of gates and fortifications, dating from Stratum X to Stratum VIII were discovered in Area M (Dothan and Porath 1982: 7–30). Strata VII and VI, representing the 7<sup>th</sup> century, show a decline in the city's status, as illustrated by the architectural remains exposed in Areas D, H, K and M. For example, the gate in Area M continues to survive with minor alterations in Stratum VII, but was destroyed after that (Dothan and Porath 1982: 34, 41).

### *2.1.3.2. Ashkelon*

Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, several excavations and probes have been conducted at the site of Tel Ashkelon, located on the Mediterranean coast, 16 km north of Gaza (map reference 107.119 – Pythian-Adams 1921, 1923; Dothan 1982: 35–6). Since 1985, an ongoing project at the site has been undertaken by the Leon Levy Expedition to Tel Ashkelon (see, e.g. Stager 2008). Recently, the first two volumes of the final excavation report have been published (Stager, Schloen and Master 2008). While the Iron Age remains have been mostly excavated in the southwestern corner of the tell, the excavators report that the Iron Age I Philistine city expanded to 60 hectares and was fortified, probably along the line of the MBIIB fortifications. In Grid 38, a series of structures were excavated, and dated to the Iron Age, yielding Philistine pottery (Stager 2008: 1580–3; Stager, Schloen and Master 2008: 216–7). These structures most probably lie directly on a Late Bronze Age II stratum, which may have been destroyed. The earliest Iron Age I stratum – Phase 20 – yielded relatively large amounts of Philistine Monochrome pottery. This phase had Canaanite forms typical of the early 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE, with no Philistine Bichrome. A distinct fill separates between this phase and the next – Phase 19 – however the architectural orientation remains the same. In this

phase, several structures were partially exposed. The buildings seem to have been built along a street and included various installations. One of the buildings contained a large hall with a rectangular hearth in its center and a bathtub in the corner. This phase yielded Philistine Monochrome and a small amount of Philistine Bichrome (similar to Ekron Stratum VIB and Ashdod Stratum XIIIa). Phases 18 and 17 are characterized by Philistine Bichrome pottery, though red-slipped pottery already appears in Phase 17. Phase 16 probably represents the beginning of the Iron Age IIA. There is not much evidence at Ashkelon for most of the Iron IIA–B (9<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE), although scattered artifacts attest to activity at the site during this period. An 8<sup>th</sup> century underground silo was discovered in lower Grid 38. The 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE is witness to the revival of Ashkelon, until the Babylonian destruction in 604 BCE, which left the city in ruins. Much of the ruins of this destruction were excavated (Stager 1996; Master 2001, 2003: 51; Stager 2008: 1584–5; Stager, Schloen and Master 2008) and yielded large amounts of 7<sup>th</sup> century Aegean imports. The excavated area was possibly the commercial center of the port of Ashkelon; the structures uncovered may have included storage houses, as attested to by the large amounts and types of pottery discovered.

### 2.1.3.3. *Tel Migne-Ekron*

Tel Migne-Ekron is located about 35 km southwest of Jerusalem and 4.5 km east of Kibbutz Revadim (map reference 1315.1356), along the northern bank of Nahal Timna. The site is ca. 20 hectares (200 dunams) in size, of which 4 comprise the upper city. In 1957, an intensive survey was conducted by Y. Naveh, who subsequently suggested the site be identified as Biblical Ekron, on the basis of the survey results (Naveh 1958). The identification of the site was confirmed by the royal dedicatory inscription found in 1996 (Gitin, Dothan and Naveh 1997). Between 1981–1996, 13 seasons of excavation were conducted at the site under the direction of Trude Dothan and Seymour Gitin, as a joint project of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research (see, e.g., Dothan and Dothan 1992: 239–54; Dothan and Gitin 1993; Meehl, Dothan and Gitin 2006; Dothan and Gitin 2008). The main fields of excavation include Field I on the northeast acropolis, i.e. the upper city; Field IV in the center of the lower city, Field III in the southern part of the lower city, which exposed the olive oil industrial zone on the crest of the southern slope, and a gate and portions of the city wall; and Field X in the northwest corner of the site (Bierling 1998), where another portion of the Iron Age I city wall was discovered.

Remains of early Iron Age I structures and a series of pottery kilns were uncovered in Field INE in Strata VII–VI. The city wall was also discovered in this field, probably dating to Stratum VIIA or VI. A small room from Stratum V was interpreted as cultic according to its finds (Dothan 2003a: 208, fig. 17). The late Iron I/early Iron IIA, represented by Stratum IV, was nearly absent in this field, however this is the only area with clearly evidence of late

Iron Age IIA–early Iron IIB (9<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, Strata III–II) occupation at the site. An area of 625 sq.m. of Iron Age I remains was excavated in Field IV, while above that, 1225 sq.m. were excavated in this field, dating to the Iron Age IIC. A series of Iron Age I structures were built on top of the Middle Bronze Age remains. In Stratum VIIB a structure (357) made up of a single-room with two pillar bases and a rectangular hearth was exposed, surrounded by an open area with several installations. In Stratum VIIA another single-room building (352) with a large brick-lined silo was added. In Stratum VIB these two structures were incorporated into a large architectural complex: Building 351. The architectural stages are correlated well with the development in the pottery assemblage: Strata VIIB–A yielded significant quantities of Philistine Monochrome pottery, while in Stratum VIB, the Philistine Bichrome pottery is introduced (Dothan and Gitin 1993: 1053–4; Dothan 2003a: 193–4; Dothan and Zukerman 2004: 4; Zukerman, Dothan and Gitin forthcoming). Later, in Strata V–IV a large public building (Building 350), recently identified by Dothan as a temple (2003a; although see a different interpretation in Mazow 2005; it is treated here as a ‘public building’), was built, with deep stone foundations and included a main pillared hall with installations and three rooms to the east with benches. In these rooms, special finds were found (Dothan 2003a: figs. 4–6). This building and the adjacent structures were violently destroyed at the end of Stratum IVA. Following a long gap during most of the Iron Age IIA–B, when the area lay abandoned, a monumental temple-palace structure was built in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE (Stratum IC – Temple-Palace Complex 650, size 38 x 57 m.; Gitin 1998, 2003: figs. 1–2). The royal inscription, dated to the erection of this structure, was found in its cella. The structure was destroyed by the Babylonians in 604 BCE (Stratum IB).

Altogether 900 sq.m. were excavated in Field III. The first notable Iron Age remains date to Stratum VI, including structures containing an assemblage of Monochrome and Bichrome Philistine pottery forms. In Stratum V, a large public building with plastered bricks was excavated, with similar architectural remains continuing into Stratum IV. During the Iron Age IIC, this area became the industrial zone of Ekron containing over 115 olive oil installations (Eitam 1996). The city wall and a gate were excavated in this area; these were probably erected in Stratum VI and continued to be used throughout the Iron I and then rebuilt in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The material from this area still awaits further research. Field X, on the western slope of the lower tell (200 sq.m. excavated), yielded remains of a city wall with adjacent structures (Bierling 1998).

Table 1. Comparative stratigraphic phases of sites in Philistia with approximate absolute dates (according to excavators) and approximate respective Aegean and Cypriot periods (see Ben-Shlomo et al. 2008: table 1; Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: table 1)\*

<i>Period (Iron Age)</i>	<i>Iron IA</i>	<i>IB(1)</i>	<i>IB(2)</i>	<i>IB/IIA</i>	<i>IIA</i>	<i>IIA/IIIB</i>	<i>IIC</i>
Philistine Pottery	MC	MC&BC	BC	BC&debased	Late Philistine	Late Philistine	--
Date (century BCE)	Early 12th	12th	11th	11/10th	10–9th	8th	7th
Ashdod stratum	XIII	XII	XI	X	X–IX	VIII	VII–VI
Ashkelon Grid 38 phase (general stratum)	20 (XVII)	19 (XVI)	18 (XV)	17 (XIV)	16 (XIII)	15 (XIII)	14 (XII)
Ekron stratum	VII	VI	V	IV	III	II	I
Gath stratum	E3 (A7)	E2(A6)	A5	A4	A3	A2	--
Greece mainland	LH IIIC Early	LH IIIC Middle	LH IIIC Late	Sub–Myc.	PG	Geom.	Archaic
Crete	LM IIIC	LM IIIC	LM IIIC	Sub–Minoan	PG	Geom.	Archaic
Cyprus	LC IIIA	LC IIIB	LC IIIB	CG I	CG I–II	CG III–CA I	CA I

\*Abbreviations: MC = Monochrome; BC = Bichrome; LH = Late Helladic; LM = Late Minoan; LC = Late Cypriot; PG = Proto-Geometric; CG = Cypro-Geometric; CA = Cypro-Archaic

#### 2.1.3.4. *Tell es-Safi/Gath*

The site of Tell es-Safi is identified by most scholars as Gath (e.g., Rainey 1975; Aharoni 1987; Schniedewind 1998).<sup>5</sup> The site lies on the border between the Judean Shephelah and the coastal plain near the southern bank of the 'Elah river (map reference 135.123). The site was surveyed and excavated briefly in 1899 by Bliss and Macalister (1902; see also Stern 1993; Avissar 2004), surveyed by Aharoni and Amiran (1955), M. Israel (1963) and M. Dayan (Ornan 1986; see also Uziel and Maeir 2005). From 1996, an expedi-

<sup>5</sup> Kitchen (1973: 62) and Stager (1995: 343) questioned this identification due to the site's proximity to Ekron and suggested Tel Haror (on account of several Philistine Monochrome sherds found there) instead.



tion headed by A.M. Maeir of Bar Ilan University has conducted surveys and excavation at the site (see, e.g., Maeir 2003: 237–46; Maeir 2008a). Up until the 2008 season, excavations were conducted in the following main areas: A, C, D, E, F, P and T (Maeir 2008a; A. Maeir, personal communication).

Area A is located on the eastern slopes of the tell. The earliest architectural remains in this area reached thus far date to the Iron Age I (Stratum A6–A7), although the exposure of these levels is still quite limited. On the terrace just below Area A to the east, several Iron Age I remains were excavated (Stratum E3, Maeir 2008a: 2079–80), as well as in Area F near the tell's peak, although these remains are also limited. The Iron I–IIA transitional phase and early Iron Age IIA (Strata A5–A4) were exposed in larger areas including floor levels. Thus far, the remains of Stratum A3, dating to the latter part of the Iron IIA, are the most extensively exposed at the site, primarily in Area A, yet also in Areas E, F and D. Over 1,200 sq.m. have been uncovered to date, including a destruction layer with over 500 complete vessels on the floors. On the eastern side of Area A, a street was defined, probably continuing from the Iron Age I. The main structure was excavated to the west of the street, and was probably two stories tall. Another building to the east of the street was partially excavated (Maeir 2008a: 2080). The pottery includes a large assemblage of Late Philistine Decorated Ware (also termed 'Ashdod Ware', Ben-Shlomo, Shai and Maeir 2004). The excavators attribute this destruction to Hazael, who campaigned in the region at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The same rich destruction level was found in Area D, a large area currently being excavated in the lower city, directly above the Elah River. Stratum A2 seals the destruction level, and dates to the Iron Age IIB, equivalent to Lachish Level III. Note that 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE finds were also found in Area F, as well as in the PEF excavations. There are no Iron Age IIC remains discovered thus far in the excavations, conforming with the identification of Tell es-Safi with Gath, which disappears in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

In addition to these four Philistine city-states (four of the 'Pentapolis'), important archaeological evidence, especially iconographic representations, come from two other sites: Tel Qasile, located at the northern edge of the study area (Mazar 1980; Mazar 1985b) and Yavneh (Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel 2006; Ziffer and Kletter 2007), located south of Tel Qasile, although still in the northern part of the Philistine territory. Cultic contexts have been excavated at both sites, and will be discussed below. Among other sites that contribute some evidence are Tell Jemmeh, Tell el-Far'ah (S), Nahal Patish, Tel Batash, Gezer, and Beth Shemesh. Several of these sites are located on the borders of the geographical area defined.

#### *2.1.4. Defining Philistine material culture*

The Philistine paradigm is one of the best examples in the archaeology of the Levant where there is a combination of historical records (both biblical and

extra-biblical), that go along with a distinct material culture appearing in a limited geographical and chronological context. In addition to the decorated Philistine pottery and various small finds (e.g. terracottas, metals and other items), the Philistine culture is also characterized by what seems to be distinct dietary and cooking traditions (Yasur-Landau 2005; Ben-Shlomo et al. 2008). These include the use of unique cooking facilities (hearths), special cooking vessels (the cooking jug, e.g., Yasur-Landau 2005) and increased pork consumption (Hesse 1986; Lev-Tov 2006) as well as other exotic foods (see Ben-Shlomo et al. 2008 for further references). All these components are not found in southern Levantine cultures of the Late Bronze Age and early Iron Age, rather show links to the Aegean and Cyprus. Burmeister (2000) has rightly indicated that when dealing with the influence and identification of immigrants on material culture, more emphasis should be given to daily domestic practices and assemblages rather than to public, cultic or burial items and contexts.

Therefore, this may indeed be considered a typical case of the connection between 'pots and people'. The Philistine material culture represents cultural elements alien to the local Canaanite cultures—elements originating from the Aegean and Cyprus, and brought to Philistia by a group of immigrants in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE. During the subsequent stages of the Iron Age—the late Iron Age I and the Iron Age II—Philistia maintains a degree of political and cultural independence (see, e.g. Ehrlich 1996; Stern 2001: 102–29; Gitin 2003; Ben-Shlomo, Shai and Maeir 2004; Shai 2006), and, thus, it seems justified to continue to treat the material culture of Philistia throughout the Iron Age as a well-defined cultural entity.

The above-mentioned depiction is based on the conservative or traditional view of the Philistine material culture advocated mainly by Moshe and Trude Dothan (1992; Dothan 1982) and A. Mazar (1985a) and accepted with various modifications by most other scholars as well (e.g., Stager 1995; Bunimovitz 1999; Barako 2000; Finkelstein 2000; Bunimovitz and Faust 2001; Yasur-Landau 2002). This view sees the Philistine phenomenon as representing the migration of a group from the west—whether from Greece, Cyprus, the Aegean coast of Turkey, or a combination of these—to Philistia in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and bringing with them various aspects of their homeland's material culture. A connection to the fall of the Mycenaean culture in the west and the records of the Sea Peoples in Egyptian and other sources is often assumed, as is the relevance of the general description of the Philistines in the Bible, especially in the books of Judges and Samuel.

Nevertheless, some scholars have expressed different views on the Sea Peoples, and although not widely accepted, these should be mentioned here. Artzy emphasizes a strong connection between the Sea Peoples and Late Bronze Age fringe groups of sailors and merchants in the eastern Mediterranean (1997, 1998: 445), who turn to piracy in the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE transition. Sherratt (1998) argues against migration theories to explain the Sea Peoples culture (including the Philistines), arguing that the culture is a



result of activity of merchant or other groups continuing Late Bronze Age traditions in the Levant (see also Sandars 1978; Bauer 1998). The sea-going merchants and/or pirates are described as having control of the sea commerce during the Iron Age I. However, by the Iron Age I, these groups settle, and manufacture their own pottery, similar to Late Bronze Age Aegean/Cypriote types (Sherratt 1998). Following such a scenario, the population of Iron Age I Philistia may be linked to Canaanites and other southern Levantine ethnic groups of the Late Bronze Age II rather than to immigrants from the Aegean region. As noted above, while such a view is not without merit, the archaeological evidence continues to support the migration theory, and therefore, other theories will not be taken into account in this work.

## 2.2. *Philistine iconography*

### 2.2.1. *The components of the iconographic assemblage*

The assemblage of objects with iconographic representations that will be discussed in this book can be divided into several types of artifacts, including:

1. *Figurative pottery and 'terracottas'*. This group of finds includes anthropomorphic and zoomorphic libation vessels, vessels in figurative shapes, vessels with figurative components and hollow or solid anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figures and figurines. Other types included in this group are figurative components of larger terracotta objects, such as cultic stands. These artifacts are at times also termed 'coroplastic art' (see Karageorghis 1993, 1996).

2. *Painted decoration on pottery*. Decorated Philistine pottery and the analysis of its decorative motifs has received much more scholarly attention than other aspects of the Philistine material culture (see, e.g., Dothan 1982; Killebrew 1998; Dothan and Zukerman 2004; Ben-Shlomo 2006a: 22–3 for references), and, thus, will be discussed here in a more general manner. The iconographic or figurative representations on Philistine pottery are in fact quite limited and the vast majority of the vessels are decorated by a relatively small number of geometric motifs. Although the motifs represented (particularly the figurative ones) are limited, comparable to Late Helladic IIIC Early and especially Late Helladic IIIC Middle pottery from the Aegean, they are still more elaborate and diverse than the motifs on other Late Bronze and Iron Age pottery. The Philistine Monochrome (or 'Philistine 1'; see Dothan, Gitin and Zukerman 2006: 72) decoration was discussed by Dothan and Zukerman (2004: 35–42), emphasizing its connections to Late Helladic IIIC Early-Middle, as well as to Aegeanizing wares in the Late Cypriote IIIA Cyprus (ca. 1200–1050 BCE). The Philistine Bichrome (or 'Philistine 2') decoration was analyzed in detail by T. Dothan (1982: 198–218), emphasizing the various origins of the motifs – Mycenaean, Cypriot, Canaanite and Egyptian. Later, the 'debased', degenerated or 'Philistine 3' assemblage

shows a sharp decrease in quantity and variability of decorative motifs and only several geometric patterns survive (Dothan 1982: 194; Ben-Shlomo 2006a: 45). The Late Philistine Decorated Ware (or 'Ashdod Ware', Ben-Shlomo, Shai and Maeir 2004; henceforth *LPDW*) is characterized mainly by surface treatment and simple linear decoration and thus does contribute to the subject of iconography in and of itself; however, various types of figuratively-shaped pottery from Philistia are decorated in this style.

3. *Depictions on bone and ivory.* In many cases, Bronze and Iron Age ivory carvings reflect high artistic skills and are viewed as one of the finest iconographic expressions of Near Eastern cultures, a perception evident in biblical and other ancient texts (see, e.g., Ussishkin 1969: 3–4; Shanks 1985: 42–3; Leibowitz 1987; Rehak and Younger 1998: 231–2, 244). These may reflect economic wealth and close international ties, especially between Egypt and Syria, the major sources of raw materials during the Late Bronze Age (see Fischer 2007). Ivories and bone objects with figurative depictions, including carved inlays and other objects, are better known from the Late Bronze and late Iron Age in the southern Levant, with hardly any examples from the early Iron Age published until recently. However, recently published ivories from Iron I levels at Ashdod and Ekron seem to fill this gap (Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 127–30; Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006), and, again, illustrate the rich iconographic culture of Iron Age Philistia. Particularly notable is an assemblage of over 80 items from Ekron and a group of ivories from several affluent houses at Stratum XII at Ashdod (Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: 2–5). This relatively large assemblage, alongside the occurrence of unique raw materials (e.g. hippopotamus canines – Ben-Shlomo 2006b: 198, fig. 5.3:5; Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: 5–6, 30, fig. 3; Lev-Tov 2006: 207–8) and the discovery of unfinished items (e.g. Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 80, fig. 3.8:18) at both sites hint at local production of ivories in Philistia. Only items which illustrate iconographic depictions will be discussed. Ivories with iconographic representations include inlays with incised and carved motifs, pyxis lids, cosmetic boxes and handles. Pomegranates and/or poppies also appear as implements placed on bone/ivory rods (Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: 24, fig. 15:4).

4. *Glyptic art.* Glyptic art (also termed miniature art) is represented by seals and scarabs and may provide the primary medium for iconographic depictions. In Philistia, these are represented by a relatively small group of objects, primarily several seals from Ashdod and seals and clay sealings from Ekron and Ashdod (Ben-Shlomo 2006c). Typical Egyptian scarabs are also found, but many are dated to the Bronze Age and are imported, not reflecting local iconographic importance. The passing down of these objects as heirlooms, and their redeposition in later strata is well known. Thus, items that were stylistically suspected to be of an earlier date are not discussed here.

5. Another, much smaller group of artifacts, includes metal objects with figurative representations, such as metal figurines, pendants and bronze

linchpins, as well as items made of other raw materials, such as stone, shell and faience.

### 2.2.2. *A provisional definition of 'Philistine iconography'*

As this work essentially deals with any iconographic representations in the region of Philistia during the Iron Age, the issue of defining a 'Philistine iconography' from a cultural or even ethnic point of view is crucial. The hypothesis of this study is that when putting together all of the archaeological and textual evidence summarized above, it is possible to point to certain components that can be used to define a unique iconography (both by its styles and its plethora of symbols). The stylistic and cultural definitions or classifications of the iconographic representation of this study should be formed in a dual light: the immigrant culture of the Philistines, with its source in the Aegean region and/or Cyprus; and the subsequent cultural processes that the original culture underwent after exposure to the local Canaanite culture. In this framework it is especially interesting to compare the iconographic representations in Philistia in the early and late Iron Age. Provisionally, three stylistic/cultural classifications can be defined: 'Aegean style', 'Philistine/hybrid style' and 'Canaanite style'. Subsequent to the presentation of data in Chapter 3, this classification will be reexamined and further analyzed in light of the archaeological evidence in section 4.1.

A specific test-case will be formed using the 'Aegean-style' female figurines (Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: 40–2, and see below, section 3.1.1.1), in order to define these terms regarding the finds from Philistia. This description is brought here (before the data is presented) as a methodological example for possible stylistic definitions; it will become clearer as the specific data will be presented in Chapter 3.

The iconographic characteristics that can identify these figurines as 'Aegean-style', 'Mycenaean-style', 'Cypriot-style', or 'Philistine' will be examined. While such labels have been used to describe various Mycenaean female figurine types (Dothan 1982: 234; Schmitt 1999: 633–4; Yasur-Landau 2001: 332; Press 2007: 177–82, 206–10), two main classes of figurines from this group will be defined here. The first class consists of figurines from Philistia that are identical or almost identical to a known Aegean (or Cypriot) type, as illustrated both by the shape and posture of the figurine and by its decoration. In this class, a complete *'type-concept'* is simply copied into or inherited by the Philistine material culture. As will be shown in Chapter 3 (as well as in Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009), examples of this phenomenon include the standing and seated female figurines, as well as the decorated bovine figurines (figs. 3.1–3.11, 3.52–3.53). While different degrees of affinity to the Aegean prototypes appear in these figurines, their form can always be traced back to the Aegean material culture: thus, the seated figurines, which reflect further development from their Mycenaean antecedents, are

included in this group. These types are also clearly distinct from the figurines known from the Late Bronze Age II Canaanite tradition, which continues into the Iron Age. The female figurines show basic differences between the 'Canaanite' and 'Philistine' types, both in the technique and in the image that they convey: while most 'Canaanite' female figurines are plaques made in a mold, and are depicted naturalistically and completely nude, the 'Aegean-style' or Philistine figurines are handmade, with a schematic body and face that is depicted as partly or completely dressed.

More specifically, Yasur-Landau defined several Aegean iconographic elements of the 'Ashdoda' figurines (2001: 332). Following this approach, such attributes can be extended to all types of Aegean-style figurines in the southern Levant. These are especially significant when they introduce elements previously unknown in the iconography of the southern Levant. For the female figurines, one of the most important elements is the concave head, which probably depicts a 'polos' (see Müller 1915). The term polos is not well-defined: it may refer to any headdress worn, particularly by female deities (Müller 1915) or to a particular type of headdress (see Holland 1929: 184). On the figurines, it refers to a headdress with a concave top, which in some cases is so low that it appears to be merely a concave head. This term, however, is used here as a mere morphological description of the top of the head. Other examples of more unusual headgear or headdress are also directly related to Aegean iconography. In addition, the painted designs on these figurines are closely paralleled on the Aegean prototypes, where they depict typical dress and jewelry. The painted decoration is also the main Aegean component on the zoomorphic figurines. It should be noted that tracing the style of these figurines to a specific region in the Aegean (such as the Argolid, the Dodecanese, and Crete) or on Cyprus is problematic, as the published data for these areas during the Late Helladic IIIC is quite limited to date.

The second class referred to above, that of the Philistine class, includes figurines with Aegean iconographic elements that are emphasized to varying degrees; the actual form and/or decorative motifs of the figurines, however, are not simple copies of Aegean types, but reflect multiple stages of development from Aegean prototypes (and thus are sometimes termed 'Aegeanized', particularly when they deviate substantially from the proto-type). These objects may also be defined as 'hybrid' types. In this case, only a selection of individual elements is associated with western traditions; nevertheless, these objects can still be defined as 'Philistine' figurines. For instance, facial attributes recalling Aegean figurines in their details seem characteristic of Philistine figurines throughout the Iron Age: these are applied pellet eyes, a protruding nose, and the lack of a mouth or an incised mouth (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 17). Distinctive Philistine details on the figurines' body include small, applied pellet breasts, which differ from the Canaanite naturalistic rounded breasts on plaque and other female figurines (e.g., Pritchard 1943; Tadmor 1982; Moorey 2003: 35–46); yet these figurines also differ from the

depiction on Cypriot LC II–III female figurines (e.g., Morris 1985: 166–70; Karageorghis 1993: 3–10, pls. 1–6). The Iron Age IIA ‘Musicians’ stand’ (figs. 3.18–3.19, Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 180–4) and several Iron Age II figurines from Ashdod (see below), as well as figurines depicted on the cultic stands from the Yavneh favissa (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 17, 24–5), all display these elements of Philistine iconography. These attributes, therefore, will define the objects as belonging to the ‘Philistine’ or hybrid style. By the Iron Age IIB–C, only certain relics of an Aegean-style iconography can be traced in the figurines, becoming a mere echo of the Aegean types. This trend is displayed, for example, on throne models or late ‘Ashdoda’ figurines. In a similar manner, an Egyptian and Egyptianized style can be defined (and is relevant especially for a group of ivories from Philistia).

Thus, as noted, *‘Philistine and hybrid style’* can be defined for objects that still carry remnants of Aegean elements but already appear in a different form. The difference between ‘hybrid’ and ‘Philistine’ is that a hybrid type of representation illustrates a certain mixture between the Aegean and non Aegean (e.g., Canaanite or Egyptian) elements, while a ‘Philistine’ type can represent a style developed in Philistia locally, however in an independent manner, albeit in the same period.

The term ‘Canaanite style’ (or ‘Levantine style’) denotes styles that continue the general southern Levantine traditions of the Late Bronze Age, or develop in the region (outside of Philistia as well) in the course of the Iron Age (see also Beck 2000); yet, several examples of finds included here in this style cannot be easily identified by specific iconographic features. The classification of the Philistine material culture into ‘Aegean’, ‘hybrid-Philistine’, ‘Canaanite’ and ‘Egyptian’ is not new, and has been implemented in the past for decorated pottery (Dothan 1982; Killebrew 1998; Dothan and Zukerman 2004; Yasur-Landau 2008). It has also been used for zoomorphic vessels (Ben-Shlomo 2008a) and for ‘Ashdoda’ figurines (Yasur-Landau 2001; Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009; for further discussion, see section 4.1).

## Chapter 3

### Iconographic representations in Iron Age Philistia

This chapter describes and discusses the actual appearances of iconographic representations in Philistia as seen in the Archaeological record, and comprises the main portion of this work. The description primarily follows a division according to the theme depicted (human, animal, vegetative, other), followed by further division according to general style (Aegean or Philistine, Canaanite, Egyptian and hybrid styles). From an archaeological point of view, this classification extracts the object from its context (the find-spot and date it belongs to and the material and technique by which it was made), and puts an emphasis on the individual iconographic depiction. Compositions of multiple themes appearing on the same object, however, are discussed together.

The terms ‘Aegean’ and ‘Philistine’ styles, mentioned above and described in Chapter 2, are rather widely interpreted and would relate here to iconographic elements that are identical, or similar to Aegean elements, or display a direct link to them in some way. Many objects, however, indicate mixed or unclear iconographic traditions and styles, and therefore the assignment of a given representation to a ‘style’ may be subjective, and even arbitrary in certain cases. Thus, although the representations are divided into these groups in the following discussion, eventually every case should be treated, at least to a certain degree, separately. Note that organic compositions appearing on a specific object will usually be discussed as one unit, and scenes appearing on pottery vessels, ceramic stands, ivory inlays or seals will be described as one unit (including the cultic stands from the Yavneh favissa). If a scene contains human depictions alongside other representations (i.e. animal, floral, etc.), it will be described and discussed in the section dealing with human depictions.

#### *3.1. Human depictions and composite scenes*

The evidence for human depictions in the Philistine material culture is still rather limited, although it may be the most important for our understanding of the Philistine culture and society; especially rare are complete scenes with compositions of figures. Most of the evidence for human depictions comes from anthropomorphic figurines and depictions on terracotta cultic stands.



Otherwise, only a handful of depictions on clay vessels and painted decoration on pottery contribute to this category, showing both Aegean and Canaanite tradition, while a group of ivories, seals and seal impressions show mostly Egyptian and Canaanite traditions.

### *3.1.1. Aegean style*

#### *3.1.1.1. Female figurines*

Aegean-style female figurines are probably one of the most important elements of Philistine material culture, indicating how symbols and forms brought by the immigrants from the west were used in daily domestic life (Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: 68). These symbols and forms probably evolved and transformed in line with the locally developed Philistine society. An important aspect of these figurines may be that, at least in their initial stage, they represent Mycenaean (post-palatial) forms that are related to the production and usage of rather exact Aegean cult practices. The female figurines of Iron Age Philistia, among other aspects of the material culture, are suggested to reflect a process of ‘creolization’ (Ben-Shlomo, Shai, and Maeir 2004: 20) or ‘cultural fusion’ (Uziel 2007) of the Philistine society. The reconstruction of the exact behaviors and beliefs represented by these objects are still very limited however, largely because of the lack of textual evidence.

Aegean-style terracotta figurines have been the focus of much research, and their importance for understanding the religion and culture of the Philistines during the Iron Age I have been readily acknowledged. Early studies of figurines from Philistia reflecting Aegean influence were published in the 1960s and early 1970s (Dothan 1967: 173–85, 1969, 1973). More attention was drawn to these figurines by the 1968 discovery (and subsequent publication) of the nearly complete, seated ‘Ashdoda’ figurine at Area H of Tel Ashdod (fig. 3.9; Dothan 1971: fig. 91:1; Hachlili 1971: 129). T. Dothan addressed these figurines in her work under the rubric of “cult and cult objects”, with the discussion of terracotta female figurines (1967: 173–85, 1982: 234–49) focusing mainly on a group of seated figurines (the ‘Ashdodas’) and standing ‘mourning figurines’ (Dothan 1969, 1973, 1982: 237–49). Brug, in his work on the Philistines, discussed such figurines under ‘religion’ (Brug 1985: 182–8). A. Mazar (1980: 78–121; 2000: 223–5) dealt with various aspects of Philistine iconography and cultic objects, in relation to the temple of Tel Qasile as well as other sites. While very few figurines with identifiable Aegean elements were unearthed at Tel Qasile, similarities were drawn between the female anthropomorphic vessel from the site and Mycenaean female cult figures (fig. 3.15:1, Mazar 1980: 81; Dothan 1982: 251). Probably the most comprehensive work on the subject is that by Schmitt (1999), who created a typology of all types of Iron Age I Philistine

terracotta figurines known at the time. Yasur-Landau also discussed the seated 'Ashdoda' figurines in the context of Aegean cult and summarized the data available then (Yasur-Landau 2001).

However, most of these studies did not properly recognize the range of Aegean-style figurines existing in Iron Age Philistia. In particular, much attention was given to the so-called 'mourning figurine' type, largely due to the studies of T. Dothan (1967, 1969, 1982); the only other major type recognized was the 'Ashdoda'. The focus of these studies created a bias in much of the subsequent research (see further discussion in Press 2007). Because of Dothan's emphasis, standing Aegean-style figurines have been generally identified as mourning female figurines (e.g., Mazar 1986: 14, fig. 6:2; Schmitt 1999: nos. 9–10, 12, 18). However, these are in fact very rare, or even nonexistent, in the Philistine material culture, with the Psi-type figurines appearing in their place (Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: 42). Previous studies have not taken into account the majority of examples found in recent excavations of Philistine sites, particularly the Tel Migne-Ekron excavations and the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon. The new finds from Ekron and Ashkelon and the recently published data from Ashdod more than double the assemblage of Aegean-style figurines. Note also that in the past, Philistine figurines have not been systematically compared with similar finds from the contemporary Late Helladic IIIC (henceforth LH IIIC) Aegean and Late Cypriot III (henceforth LC III) Cyprus; rather, they have generally been compared with the better-known, but less relevant Mycenaean LH IIIB types (see table 1 for the chronological breakdown of these styles). Therefore, the new typology of these types of figurines (presented in Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009) emphasizes the definition and detection of their Aegean iconographic components, and compares them, as much as possible, with contemporary Aegean and Cypriot figurines. It is still not possible to study the context, chronology, and possible functions of these artifacts as systematically as their typology. Yet, these aspects, along with the significance of the iconographic components represented (some of which continue into the Iron Age II) can be briefly discussed.

The main types of Aegean-style female figurines in Philistia (figs. 3.1–3.11) include standing female figurines, seated female figurines, and other types of female figurines, which are less common. There is no clear evidence of male Aegean-style figurines (which are rare also in the Aegean), but their appearance cannot be ruled out, and are possibly represented by certain heads or other fragments.

*Standing female figurines ('Psi', figs. 3.1–3.4).* This group depicts a schematic standing female figure with its hands uplifted. This type of figurine has only been recognized relatively recently (Schmitt 1999: 594–9, Type I; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 122; Press 2007: 169–201; Ben-Shlomo and Press



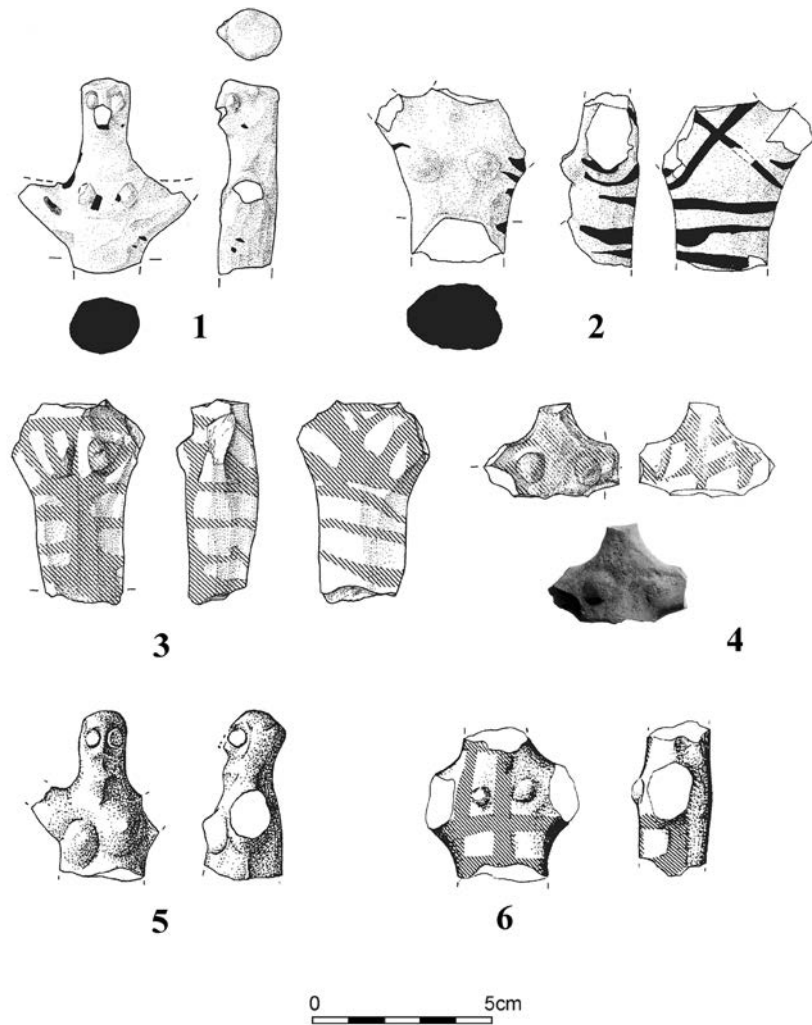


Figure 3.1. Aegean-style Psi figurines.

2009: 42–8)<sup>6</sup> and will therefore be described in relative detail, through the (at least seven) examples from Tel Ashdod, Ekron (at least two examples), and

<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that in the Hebrew version of *The Philistines and Their Material Culture*, Trude Dothan, (1967: 181–4), observed that Philistine female figurines (including “figurines of mourning women”) belong to Furumark’s Psi 2 type. (Note that Furumark [1941], and later French [1971], did not separate the mourning figurines as an independent type.) However, in the English version of *The Philistines and Their Material Culture*, Dothan simply referred to them as “mourning figurines” elaborating on her earlier discussion of this type.

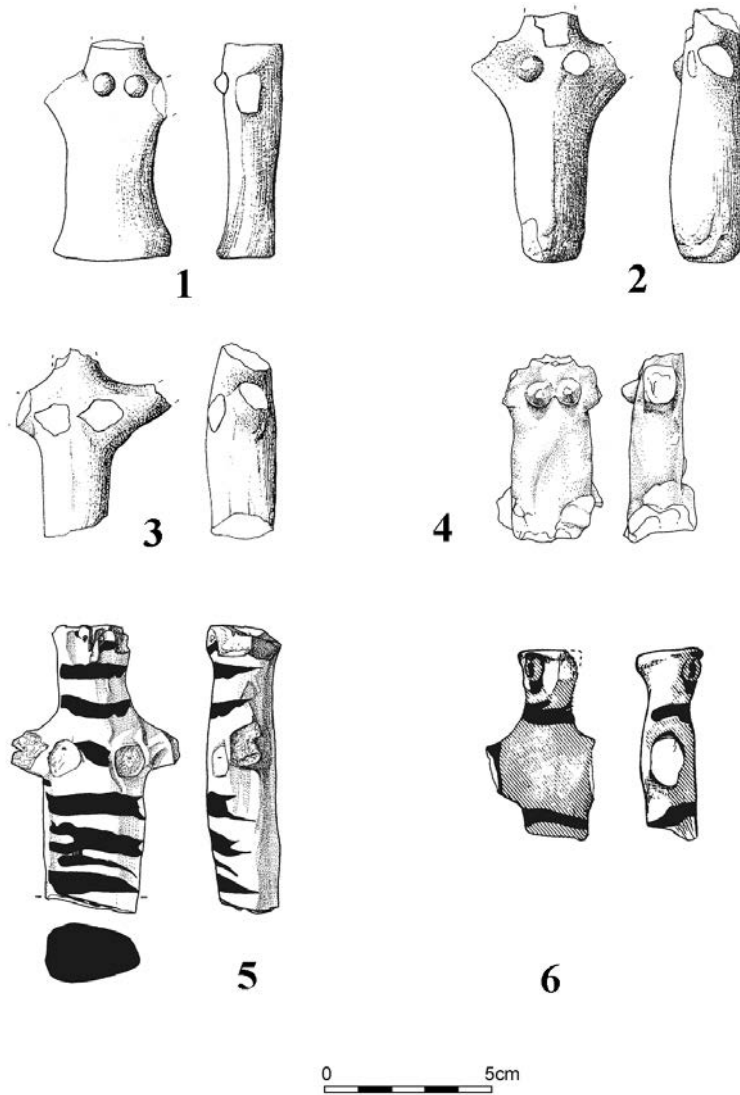


Figure 3.2. Aegean-style Psi figurines.

Ashkelon (at least five examples) (figs. 3.1–3.4).<sup>7</sup> As demonstrated, the Philistine Aegean-style Psi-type figurines have several attributes linking them to the 12<sup>th</sup> century Late Mycenaean Psi figurines (e.g., Furumark 1941: 86; French 1971: 133–9, pl. 22, Late Psi type) rather than to the 13<sup>th</sup> century LH IIIB Psi figurines.

<sup>7</sup> Another example is a surface find from Tel Qasile (Mazar 1986: 14, fig. 6:2, pl. 3b).



Figure 3.3. Aegean-style Psi figurine from Ekron (see fig. 3.1:1).

Unfortunately, we are yet to find a complete example of this figurine, with mostly body fragments for evidence. Nevertheless, several large fragments, as well as Mycenaean parallels enable us to reconstruct the shape of this figurine (e.g., figs. 3.1:1, 3.2:5 3.3–3.4). The head is relatively narrow, not wider than the neck, with a flat top. While there is no distinct example with a concave polos, it is possible (if not likely) that some of the polos heads (fig. 3.5) also belong to this type.<sup>8</sup> The details of the schematic face include eyes made of applied pellets (or pierced on the sides of the nose; see figs. 3.2:5; 3.4), a small pinched nose, and sometimes an incised or indented mouth (figs. 3.1:1, 5; 3.3). The body has a relatively thin oval section (fig. 3.1:3–4), and two uplifted arms, which are usually small; the complete figurine would have been approximately 10 cm high (see figs. 3.2:5, 3.4). The lower body of an example from Ekron (fig. 3.1:2) is thickened, possibly indicating a pillar base (for Aegean parallels, see French 1971: 126). The schematic breasts are two small pellets applied to the body (figs. 3.1:1–6, 3.2:1–5). In certain cases, perforations in the center of the breasts probably depict the nipples (figs. 3.1:3–4, 3.2:5). The use of applied breasts is also typical of Late Psi Aegean figurines appearing during the LH IIIC (French 1971: 133), in contrast to the LH IIIB Psi figurines, where the breasts are pinched from the torso.

<sup>8</sup> Most Mycenaean LH IIIB Psi figurines have pinched ‘birdlike heads’ with a widening top depicting the polos (‘high polos’), which is densely decorated (e.g., French 1971: 133–5, pls. 19:b–c; 21:c–d). The LH IIIC Late Psi figurines often have either a low polos (‘slight polos’, as French terms it) or none at all (see French 1971: 135–9, e.g., pl. 22a:24). This is one of the many respects in which the Philistine figurines show the same elements that are just developing on LH IIIC figurines.



Figure 3.4. Aegean-style figurine from Ashkelon (see fig. 3.2:5).

When preserved, the decoration most likely depicts the clothing (at least some of the examples); it is monochrome, at times on white wash or slip. One example from Ekron (fig. 3.1:2) depicts crisscrossed straps on the back of the figurine, with horizontal bands below (the decoration probably existed on the front but was not preserved). This pattern probably depicts a distinct type of ceremonial dress and appears on Psi-type figurines from the Aegean (e.g., Phylakopi: French 1985: fig. 6.2:1521; Lefkandi: French 2006: pl. 73:21), and Cyprus (Enkomi: e.g., Courtois 1971: figs. 149:687–8, 151:657). A similar pattern probably appears on an example from Ashkelon (fig. 3.1:3), while other examples from Ashkelon and Ashdod have horizontal stripes on the neck and body and sometimes even on the face (figs. 3.1:4,6, 3.2:5), possibly a more schematic representation of the same motif. Similar dress straps on the back are depicted on a head from Ashdod (fig. 3.5:1). A hatched pattern appears on an unstratified and fragmentary example from Ashdod Area M (fig. 3.1:6); parallels for this decoration come from Marmaria at Delphi (Demangel 1926: fig. 22:3–6). Horizontal bands on the neck also appear (figs. 3.2:5; 3.5:2–3). These depictions appear on LH IIIC Psi figurines at Asine (Frödin and Persson 1938: 308, fig. 212), the Marmaria at Delphi (Demangel 1926: figs. 23:1; 24:6), and Tiryns (Kilian 1979: fig. 15: center left). Some of the examples were probably not decorated, seen on LH IIIC Late Psi examples (e.g., French 1971: pl. 22a:26).

Examples with a triangular-shaped body that narrows towards the abdomen (such as fig. 3.2:2–3), or a rectangular body (fig. 3.2:1,4–5) also

occur. This body shape, sometimes even more pronounced, is also found on Late Psi examples (e.g., at the Marmaria: Demangel 1926: figs. 16d, 28:1–2; and a larger figurine [height ca. 19 cm] from Ialysos T40/2: Maiuri 1923–1924: 195–6, pl. 4; Benzi 1992: pl. 72b, which also has elaborate painted decoration, including several rings around the neck and circles around the breasts).<sup>9</sup> Several body fragments have their hands stretched to the sides (Ashkelon MC 45737; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: fig. 3.62:2). These figurines are undecorated or schematically decorated and vary in their lower parts. This variant also has parallels in the Mycenaean Late Psi D Group (French 1971: 133, 139, pl. 20d). In cases where the abdomen widens and curves inward (fig. 3.2:1, 4; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: fig. 3.115:5), the figurine may have been attached to a vessel rim (possibly of a krater).

At least one of the examples from Ekron (fig. 3.1:1) and two examples from Ashkelon (fig. 3.1:3–4) are made of well-levigated light-colored calcareous clay, similar to the fine Monochrome pottery (Ben-Shlomo 2006a: 24; Dothan, Gitin, and Zukerman 2006: 72). Other fragments are made of the more common reddish-brown clay with a gray core and quartz and limestone inclusions. The examples from Ashdod Stratum XII (such as figs. 3.1:5, 3.2:2) as well as most examples from Ashkelon (e.g., fig. 3.2:4–5) are made of this latter clay type as well.

The Psi-type figurines appear together with Philistine Monochrome and Bichrome pottery in Iron Age I strata of the Philistine cities (Ashdod Strata XII–XI, Ekron Strata VI–V; Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: fig. 9), with Iron Age II examples from Ashdod being most likely residual (figs. 3.1:6, 3.2:2). However, they are yet to be found bearing the characteristic Philistine Bichrome decoration. On the other hand, examples with red slip come from Ashdod Area D (fig. 3.2:6, Hachlili 1971: 131, although lacking breasts) and from Tel Qasile (Mazar 1986: 14, fig. 6:2, pl. 3:2, which according to the illustrations, appears to be red-slipped in the front, and depicting a possible necklace). Therefore, although Psi-type figurines are still lacking in the earliest Iron Age I horizon in Philistia (Ashdod Stratum XIII, Ashkelon Phase 20, and Ekron Stratum VII; see Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: fig. 9), it seems that these figurines do indeed represent the earliest stage in the Philistine material culture. As Psi-type figurines are generally rare and the exposure of earliest Iron I strata in these sites is more limited, this absence could be incidental. Moreover, the fact that several of these figurines have a monochrome decoration, and more importantly are produced using a clay recipe identical to that of the fine Philistine Monochrome pottery, suggests that these specific examples may have been made in the earliest stage of Philistine settlement.

<sup>9</sup> These figurines could represent a possible link between the Psi-type and the ‘Ashdoda’-type figurines (see below), as they have a flatter body with stubbier arms.

French sees the Psi figurine as evolving from the Phi figurines, which had a floruit during the LH IIIA (1971: 128). By the LH IIIB, the Psi type, with both hollow-stemmed and columnar base, became more prominent; during the LH IIIC this was probably the most common Mycenaean figurine. The decorative design varies: during the LH IIIB, the vertical stripes on the upper part of the body are very common (French 1971: 127–8), whereas during the LH IIIC, the decoration is more schematic, though horizontal band patterns, probably depicting dress and jewelry, appear as well (French 1971: 133–4, pl. 20:d; see also Kilian 1979: figs. 13–15; French 2006: 262, pl. 73:23). In most cases, the LH IIIC type has small applied pellet breasts. Standing female figurines with upraised arms also appear at several sites in LC III Cyprus, most notably Enkomi and Kition (see Karageorghis 1977–78). However these are generally less similar in their shape and decoration to Mycenaean figurines than the Philistine examples. Particularly noteworthy is the large concentration of such figurines in the courtyard west of the Sanctuary of the Ingot God at Enkomi, dating to Cypro-Geometric (CG) I (Karageorghis 1993: 58) or slightly earlier (the LC IIIC, Courtois 1971: 326–43, figs. 141–54; Webb 1999: 213–5). While most of the Cypriot examples have a vertical disk-shaped and a flattened head (a local Cypriot component),<sup>10</sup> others are somewhat similar to those from Philistia, including the details of decoration (e.g., Courtois 1971: figs. 141:10–1, 142:13–4, 149:687–8; 151:657, 684; 152:637, 639). Some Psi-type figurines may have been attached to vessel rims (Courtois 1971: figs. 153:655, 636, 154:685; also Karageorghis 1975; Karageorghis 1993: pl. 17:1–3, from Alambra, Alaas, and Hala Sultan Tekke). Another possible example from LC III Cyprus is from Maa-Palaeokastro (Karageorghis and Demas 1988: pl. 221:19). While this type continues into the Geometric period in Cyprus (Morris 1985: 174–7; Karageorghis 1993: 82–5, pls. 36–7), with new elements reflecting Cretan influence, its early appearance is probably an independent phenomenon related to LH IIIC Early figurines from the Aegean.

In summary, it is now clear that Psi figurines were a major figurine type in early Philistine culture. It is strongly linked with Aegean prototypes and illustrates variants that are typical of the late Mycenaean Psi figurines of the LH IIIC. These include characteristics such as the low polos, applied breasts, irregular or schematic decoration or lack of decoration, and varying body shape. Thus, this figurine type indicates links between the material cultures of the Aegean and Philistia during the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE., rather than an ‘archaizing’ tradition, copying the disappearing 13<sup>th</sup> century LH IIIB figurines.

<sup>10</sup> This head shape, probably depicting a special hat or headdress, is typical of Cypriot iconography, particularly on late Geometric female figurines, and appears to indicate Cretan influence (e.g., Karageorghis 1993: 58–62, 82–5).



*Other standing figurines and figurine heads (figs. 3.5–3.8).* Tau figurines are well known from the LH IIIB–C Aegean (French 1971: 124–6), depicting females holding or covering their breasts with their hands. A fragmentary figurine from Ashkelon (fig. 3.8:4; Press 2007: 171) may be related to a Tau-type figurine. The flat body, with its wide upper torso, and the applied pellet breasts are possibly similar to the Psi type; the (broken) arms, however, are not uplifted but pointing downward. The red decoration consists of a band around the neck and partial bands around the shoulders and breasts, depicting some kind of dress (which seems to expose the breasts) or possibly emphasizing the breasts. Similar depictions are seen on some of the ‘Ashdoda’ figurines (figs. 3.9, 3.10:4) and on figurines from Tiryns (e.g., Kilian 1978: figs. 20–21). This could be a type of hybrid figurine, a combination of Aegean style/technique and local Canaanite form/gesture (along with, for example, an ‘Ashdoda’ figurine from Ashkelon in which the hands are possibly cupping the breasts; see below). Note also that the breasts are more emphasized than on the typical Philistine Psi-type (or Mycenaean Psi) figurines.

As noted above, the type defined as the ‘mourning’ female figurine has received a relatively large amount of scholarly attention, especially from T. Dothan (1969, 1973, 1982: 237–49; see also Schmitt 1999: 600–7, Type II; Mazar 2000: 223). These are female figurines with their hands placed on top of their heads, in a gesture of mourning. Several possible examples have a narrow, pointed lower portion, perhaps indicating their placement into some sort of a socket or their attaching to rims of open vessels. In fact, as noted above, there is very little direct evidence for this type at Philistine sites, and many of the Philistine figurines referred to as ‘mourning figurines’ in various studies are in fact Psi-type figurines. Dothan presents unprovenanced examples from Tell ‘Eitun and Azor (Dothan 1969, 1973), along with one example from Tell Jemmeh (fig. 3.8:7, the only example from an excavation), and relates these to the mourning figurines from the LH IIIC cemeteries of Perati in Attica (Iakovidis 1966, 1969–1970: pls. 51:68–71, 177–8, Tomb 65) and Ialysos on Rhodes (Maiuri 1923–1924: fig. 101). There, kalathoi appeared with the figurines modeled directly onto the rim, or with perforations on the rim, for the figurines to be attached to by the means of a dowel or peg (see Iakovidis 1966). In general, however, this type is rare in the Aegean.<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that the figurines from Tell ‘Eitun are stylistically quite different from Mycenaean figurines and from any other type of Philistine figurine. While the small preserved rim to which they are attached does resemble Philistine krater rims, these vessels may not date to the Iron Age I (note that these fragments are not from excavation). This indicates that the figurines described by T. Dothan, especially those from Tell ‘Eitun, cannot be relied on as examples of Philistine Aegean-style figurines.

<sup>11</sup> There are also possible male mourning figurines, in the Sub-Minoan period, from Vrokastro, Crete (Hayden 1991: 130, 134, no. 36).



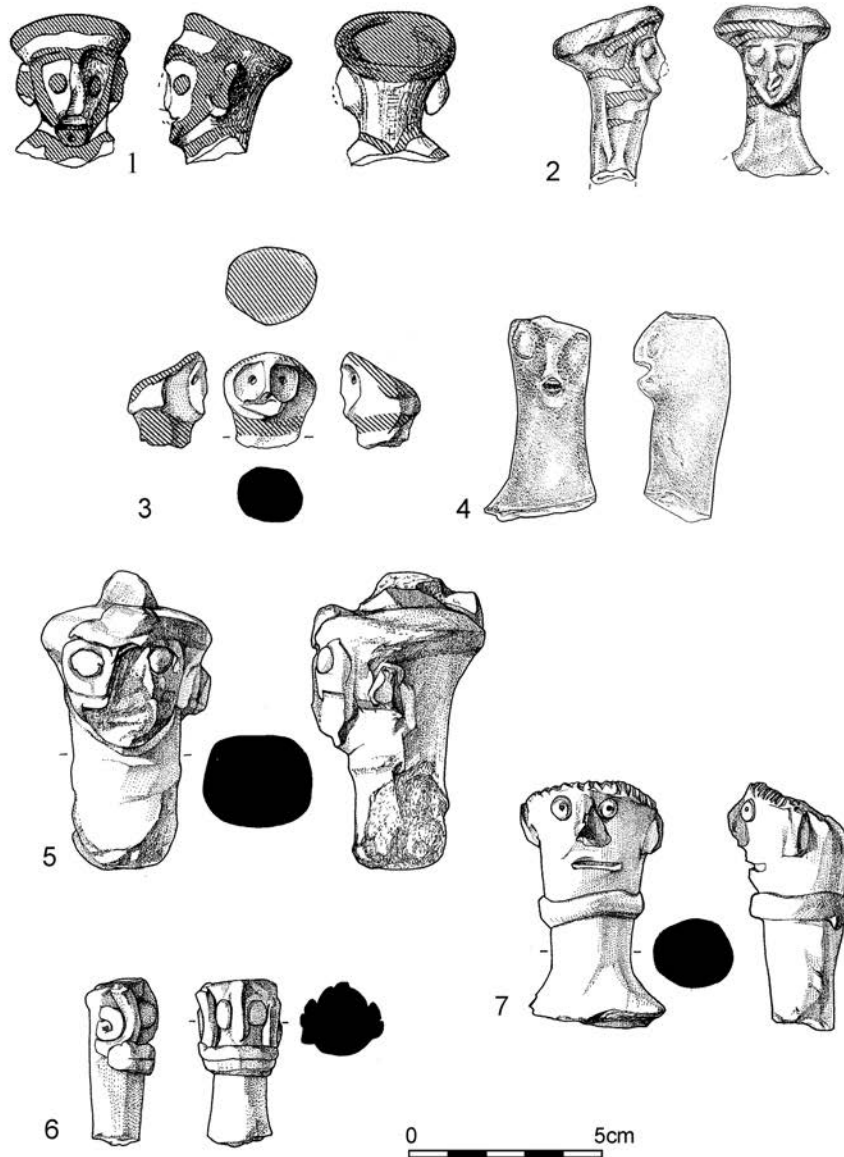


Figure 3.5. Aegean-style figurine heads (see Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: fig. 10).

One example from Ashkelon (fig. 3.8:5) possibly belongs to this type. It has a birdlike head with a concave top and remnants of an application on the top that may represent a hand on the head. One example from Ekron (fig. 3.8:6) has a narrow, 'peg-shaped' body and uplifted arms; the head was not preserved, and, as there are no breasts depicted and the bottom is very pointed

(as on the Tell Jemmeh example, fig. 3.8:7; Petrie 1928:17, pl. 36:2; Dothan 1982: 237, fig. 12:1), this could be either a mourning figurine or another type of standing figurine. A complete female figurine from Iron I Tel Gerisa (Herzog 1984: 56, pl. 7:E) has a similar shape, but the hands are positioned below the breasts. Most standing female figurine fragments are not mourning figurines, as most heads do not show attached hands, and, as noted above, there is no clear example of this type from Philistia. Most of the figurines included in this category should be considered Psi-type figurines.<sup>12</sup>



Figure 3.6. Miniature Aegean-style figurines from Ekron.

<sup>12</sup> Open vessels with figurines attached to their rim and related to burials may be considered an Aegean characteristic. While Psi figurines appear to have been rarely attached to vessel rims, Tau figurines have been found attached to rims (e.g., Hala Sultan Tekke: Karageorghis 1993: pl. 18.2). This is reasonable, as beating or tearing clothing at the breast is another gesture of mourning, along with tearing the hair and beating the head, as shown in later Greek literature. For a discussion of these literary references, and their relationship to the figurines (as well as painted Greek representations of mourning), see, e.g., Ahlberg-Cornell 1971: 264–5; Mylonas 1963: 476; Immerwahr 1995: 110. It seems that all of the figurines attached to kalathoi display some mourning gestures.



Figure 3.7. Figurine head from Ekron.

Based on certain characteristics (head size, neck length and especially neck diameter), it may be possible to assign several Philistine figurine heads (fig. 3.5) either to the Psi or 'Ashdoda' types (Press 2007: 167–9, table 1; Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: 54). Generally, short and slender necks are more typical of the Psi type, while long thick necks characterize the 'Ashdoda' type. There is, however, a small group of heads whose classification is more problematic. These consist of a few narrow heads and necks with flat tops, or with bird-shaped faces with pinched noses (figs. 3.5:4; 7; also Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: fig. 3.115:6; Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: fig. 11; and possibly Dothan 1971: fig. 65:11 and Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: fig. 3.115:10). This group could belong to either the Psi type or the 'Ashdoda' type, although the latter seems less likely. It is also possible that they belong to another type which remains unclassified (see Tau/Phi figurines from LH IIIB Midea with bird-shaped heads: Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 2001: 185, pls. 50:f, 51:c). One example from Ashkelon (fig. 3.5:3) has a narrow head, slightly widening on top, which is painted in red (similar to fig. 3.5:1), and has remnants of a band on the neck. This example probably belonged to a Psi-type figurine. Most Mycenaean LH IIIB–C figurines have bands on top of the polos (see French 1971: 128–31), a feature also found on examples from Ashdod (Area G, Stratum X: Dothan and Porath 1993: fig. 44:11), and Ashkelon (fig. 3.5:3; MC 50562).

Some of the heads from Ashkelon display unusual features. One large example has a convex head with an elongated protrusion along the top, which seems to continue as a bulge on the front of the head (fig. 3.5:5; Stager 2006a: 15). This may depict a braid of hair tied and fastened to the top of the

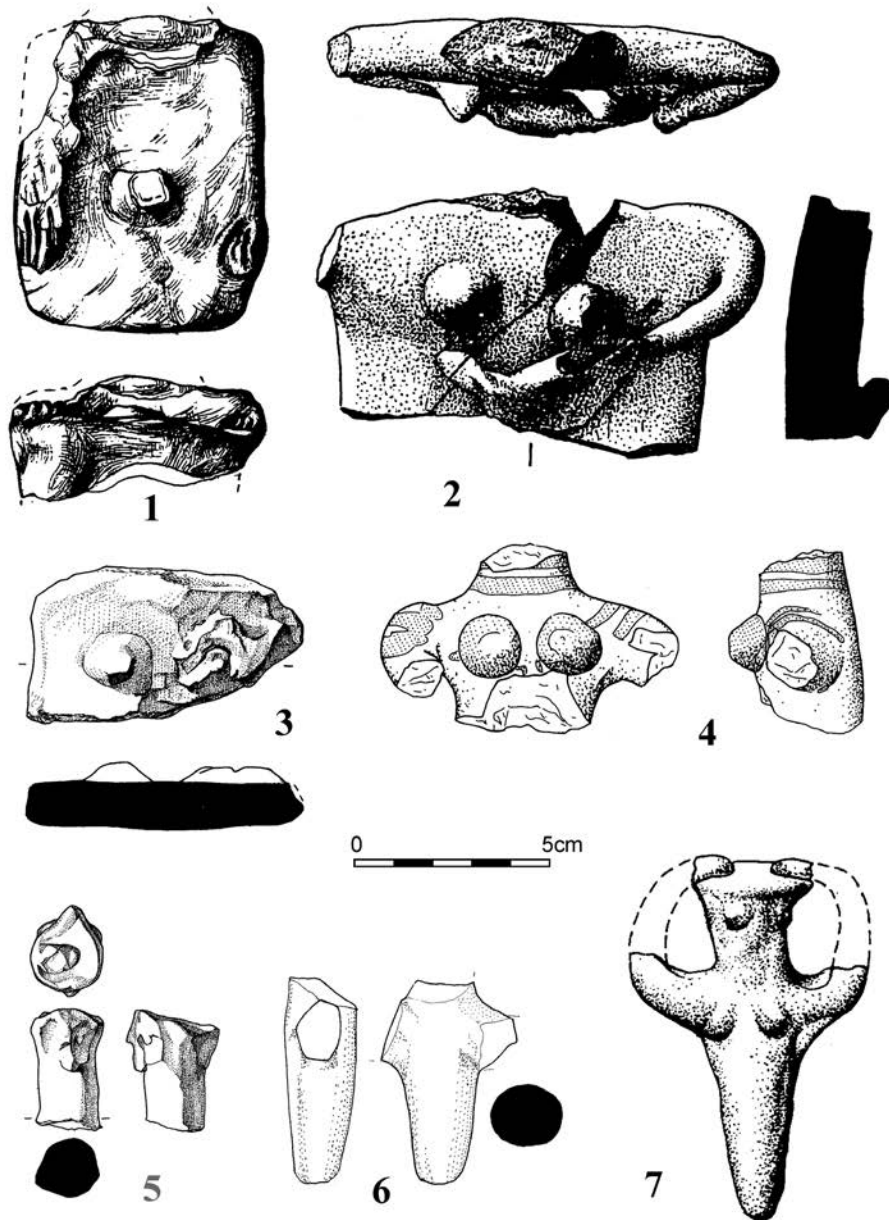


Figure 3.8. Various Aegean-style figurines from Philistia (see Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: fig. 8).

head,<sup>13</sup> similar to depictions on large figures from Cult Room 110 at Tiryns (Kilian 1979: fig. 20; 1981a: fig. 6), Phylakopi (French 1985: fig. 6:5), and the Temple Complex at Mycenae (Moore and Taylour 1999: pls. 12–14, 19). A similar headdress appears on a figurine from Sinda (Furumark and Adelman 2003: pl. 39:3).<sup>14</sup> This may very well be the head of a large ‘Ashdoda’ figurine.

Another head from Ashkelon (fig. 3.5:6) has a double clay strip applied on the neck/mouth and in between the eyes and ears. The applied ears are elaborate, and the pellet eyes are very large. This double strip of clay may depict a scarf or a necklace worn on or below the mouth and neck and tied around the head. It is unclear whether the head is a Psi type or another type of Aegean-style figurine, as its details show a mixture of affinities. For instance, the applied decoration (scarf or necklace) recalls Syrian Bronze Age female figurines (e.g., at Hama: Badre 1980: pl. 5:110). An additional head from Ashkelon (fig. 3.5:7) shows a necklace (or scarf) on the neck. The top of the head is concave, with incisions on the edge, possibly representing part of the headdress (or even hair); the scarf/necklace is a clay strip applied almost completely around the neck; the ears are applied on the sides, and the applied eyes are perforated for pupils. The protruding nose is applied, and the mouth is incised. The facial details are somewhat different from those of the other Aegean-style figurine heads.<sup>15</sup>

As these figurine heads have no clear sexual attributes, they are assumed to be female, lacking further evidence. This is because of two main reasons: (1) the figurines parallels from Mycenaean Greece and Cyprus are almost exclusively female; and (2) hardly any definitively male Philistine figurines are known. At the same time, the existence of male Philistine figurines cannot be ruled out. A figurine head from the ‘Gezer Cache’ (fig. 3.23:1; Macalister 1912: fig. 27; Dothan 1982: 227–9, fig. 1:2) and a head from the PEF excavations at Gath (fig. 3.23:2), both discussed by T. Dothan (Dothan 1982: 227–9, fig. 5), seem to depict males. The example from Gezer (fig. 3.23:1) seems to be decorated in the Philistine Bichrome style; the painted facial details include emphasized eyes, a moustache and a beard; there is an applied and painted headdress or tiara. The figurine from Gath (fig. 3.23:2) has applied pellet eyes, nose and an incised mouth, with the front part of the head’s top similar to the Gezer example. These figurines may also belong to the Aegean-style group, and have a somewhat general resemblance to Mycenaean figurine heads. These are rare examples of male depictions in this style.

The miniature freestanding figurine (3–5 cm in height) is another type that is probably Aegean-style, with two examples from Ekron (fig. 3.6; Gunneweg et al. 1986: fig. 1:14) and one from Ashkelon (Ben-Shlomo and

<sup>13</sup> I thank Melissa Vettters from Heidelberg University for suggesting this possibility to me.

<sup>14</sup> I thank Assaf Yasur-Landau for this reference.

<sup>15</sup> A Psi-related figurine from Tel Qasile (Mazar 1986: fig. 6:2) may also have a necklace depicted on the neck.



Press 2009: 56). The lower portion of the object is wider, enabling a stable positioning of the figurine. The posture of the hands, uplifted (fig. 3.6:1) and extended forward (fig. 3.6:2), along with the widening and the somewhat concave head top, resemble Mycenaean Psi figurines. The example in fig. 3.6:2 has a perforation in the lower body, depicting either the female genitalia or the navel; this feature is notably uncommon for Aegean-style figurines.<sup>16</sup> These figurines are crudely made of coarse clay; they are poorly fired and show soot marks. It is possible that they were put in fire in or near hearths. Another possible example is said to come from Tell es-Safi (Schmitt 1999: no. 91, Rockefeller Mus. no. p. 84).<sup>17</sup> These figurines may be comparable to small figurines from Haghia Triada, Crete (D'Agata 1999: 24, pls. 1: A1, 2:A10, though of earlier date) and an example from an LC IIIA tomb at Bamboula, Cyprus (Benson 1972: 136, pl. 52: B1560).

*Seated female figurines ('Ashdoda' figurines, figs. 3.8:1–3, 3.9–3.11).* The 'Ashdoda' type is the best-known Philistine figurine, depicting a seated female, with a chair integrated into the figure's lower body (figs. 3.9–3.10). This type was first identified at Ashdod—where the only nearly complete example was found in Area H, Stratum XI (fig. 3.9; Hachlili 1971: 129)—leading to the nickname 'Ashdoda'. It is this Philistine type that has drawn the majority of scholarly attention to date (e.g., Dothan 1982: 234–7; Schmitt 1999: 608–16, type III; Yasur-Landau 2001; Press 2007: 201–16; Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: 49–54, figs. 5–7).<sup>18</sup> Altogether, at least 37 examples come from Ashdod (including 11–14 late examples from the Iron Age II), at least 6 from Ekron, 14–16 from Ashkelon, and one from Gath (Schmitt 1999: 611, no. 64); up to 10 additional examples appear at other sites (see below). While this type deviates from Mycenaean seated female figurine prototypes (French 1971: 167–72; Dothan 1982: 234), it is included amongst the Aegean-style figurines, as they share a cluster of Mycenaean iconographic components, as illustrated below.

Based on the nearly complete example from Ashdod (fig. 3.9), which stands 17 cm high, the basic features of this type can be reconstructed. The figurine represents a seated female: there is a small schematic head with a low, flaring polos, a long neck, a very schematic vertical flat body with applied breasts, and a seat with four legs. The details of the face include

<sup>16</sup> The figurine in fig. 3.6:1 was analyzed by neutron activation and was determined to come from Ashdod (Gunneweg et al. 1986: 14). While Schmitt (1999: no. 5) classified it as a Psi-type figurine, here it is treated separately due to its size and technique (although the position of the arms is essentially that of the regular Psi figurines).

<sup>17</sup> Several other fragmentary figurines from the Pentapolis sites may also be miniatures: e.g., Ashkelon MC 40293 (Press 2007: fig. 2:1).

<sup>18</sup> The lower part of a figurine(?) from Ashdod Stratum XII (Dothan and Porath 1993: fig. 35:10) is defined by Schmitt as "proto Ashdoda" (Schmitt 1999: 608, no. 20, "type 0"); as the character of this object is not clear and other parallels do not exist, this is not treated as a separate type.

an applied nose (relatively prominent when preserved – e.g., figs. 3.10:1–2, 3.11) and two applied pellet eyes, sometimes on the nose itself (figs. 3.10:2). Some head fragments also have applied ears (Dothan and Porath 1993: figs. 44:11; 46:9; Ashkelon MC 50562). Heads with long, thick necks are typical of the ‘Ashdoda’ figurines (e.g., fig. 3.11; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: fig. 3.80:2). Some figurines with short necks, however, also appear to be examples of ‘Ashdodas’ (e.g., Ashkelon MC 50766; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: fig. 3.80:1). The top of the head may be concave (more faithful to the polos depiction; fig. 3.9), flat (fig. 3.10:2), or convex (fig. 3.10:1).

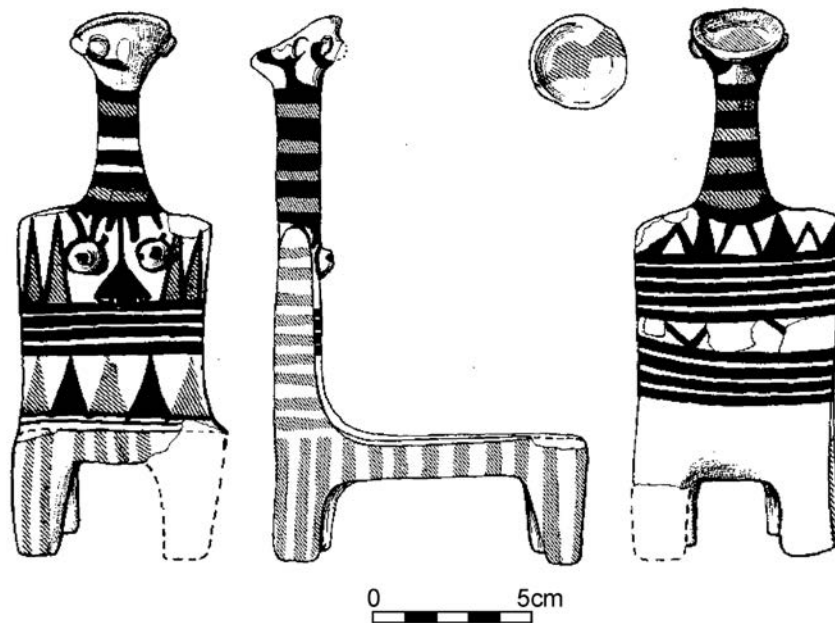


Figure 3.9. ‘Ashdoda’ figurine from Ashdod  
(after Dothan 1971: fig. 91:1, courtesy of IAA).

The breasts are usually very small; in several cases (e.g., fig. 3.10:4; Ashkelon MC 46097) they are very close together. Other examples have no breasts, and these are usually undecorated, (such as fig. 3.10:5; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: fig. 3.62:4). In several cases, the figurines have pointed shoulders (fig. 3.10:5; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: figs. 3.62:4, 3.103:2, 3.115:4). This feature could derive from the intersection of the chair’s pointed upper part (as on LH III examples – e.g., Mylonas 1956: pls. 14:6; 15:6). Alternatively, it is possible that this feature is a remnant of earlier Psi-type figurines’ gesture of uplifted hands. The shape of the seat is either rectangular (fig. 3.9) or square (fig. 3.10:6). Seat fragments are classified as ‘Ashdoda’ figurines



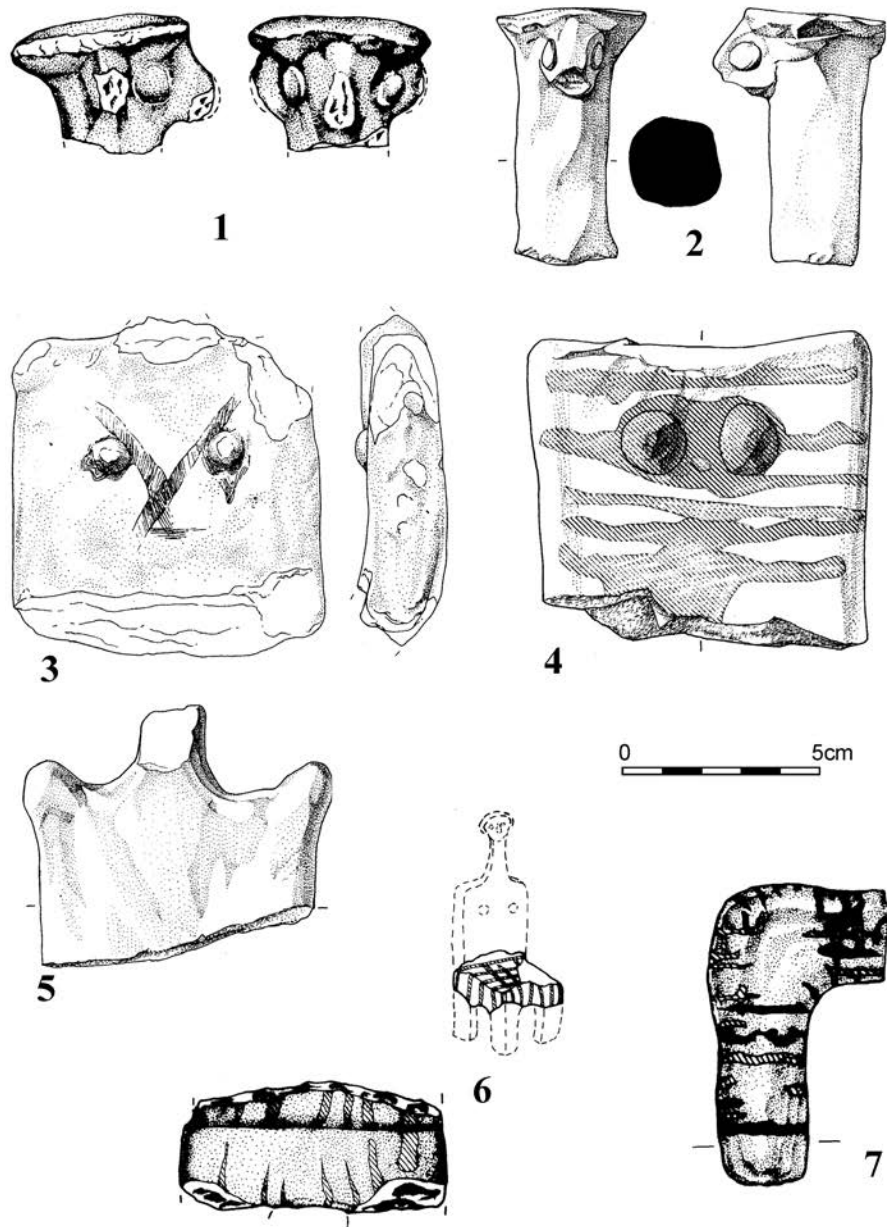


Figure 3.10. Aegean-style seated figurines ('Ashdoda')  
(see Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: fig. 5).

(figs. 3.10:6, 3.8:1) when they show remains of a wide, relatively flat body and/or neck, hands, or decoration typical of these figurines (examples without these features could also belong to bed models or ‘offering tables’ – see Hachlili 1971: 129–30). Larger examples of ‘Ashdoda’ figurines also occur, as indicated by the large leg of a seated figurine found in Ekron Stratum IV, with Philistine Bichrome decoration (fig. 3.10:7), and possibly by large heads from Ekron and Ashkelon (figs. 3.10:1–2, 3.11, 3.5:5). It is possible that the ‘Ashdoda’ figurines were typically larger than other female figurines, specifically the Psi type; the nearly complete example, however, is relatively small.



Figure 3.11. ‘Ashdoda’ figurine head from Ashkelon  
(see fig. 3.10:2; courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon).

In general, the ‘Ashdoda’ figurines are either undecorated (except for white slip) or decorated in the Philistine Bichrome style, with red and black decoration over a chalky, white slip. The decorative motifs are often related to Aegean depictions on female figures and figurines. The decoration of the complete figurine from Ashdod (fig. 3.9) includes a typical Mycenaean triangular pendant (Yasur-Landau 2001: 332). The neck is decorated with red, black, and white horizontal bands (see also Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 186, fig. 3.80:2). The body is decorated with vertical red triangles and stripes, a motif that is more Philistine than Aegean (e.g., Dothan 1982: figs. 34:4–5, 46:2). This decoration continues on the rear. Other examples of body fragments from Ashkelon (fig. 3.10:3–4) also show remains of a

dress depicted by an 'X' between the breasts, with circles around them, and a series of red horizontal bands below the circles (fig. 3.10:4; see parallels from Asine: Frödin and Persson 1938: 308, fig. 212: left; and from Tiryns: Kilian 1979: fig. 15: top right).<sup>19</sup> One of these examples (figs. 3.10:3) is also faintly decorated with two horizontal bands on the upper chest and a vertical wavy line descending from the right breast. These examples are more schematic and are not decorated on the back. Stripes continue in red and black on the seat and legs, as also seen in two examples from Ekron (fig. 3.10:6–7). The stripes on the seat and legs may either be a depiction of the dress flowing down the seat, or a more abstract type of decoration. Notably, no examples have been found yet of 'Ashdoda' figurines decorated in red slip.

A variation of the seated female figurine found in Tel Qasile Stratum X (fig. 3.8:2) is a fragment with an arm depicted across the torso; Mazar (1986: 13) suggested that the figure was cradling a child.<sup>20</sup> A figurine from Ashkelon (fig. 3.8:3) also appears to have an arm on the torso, but with the hand possibly cupping the breast. Based on the shape of the body fragments, it is very likely that these examples are simply variants of the 'Ashdoda' type.

A later development of the 'Ashdoda' can be defined as a 'Late Ashdoda' type. It appears in Iron Age II contexts at Ashdod (see Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: 61, fig. 9) and is cruder and, other than white slip, lacks decoration (fig. 3.8:1; Dothan 1971: fig. 63). Several examples of this type depict hands resting on the sides of the seat (Dothan and Freedman 1967: fig. 46:6–7; Dothan 1971: fig. 63:3). One Iron Age IIB–C figurine from Ashdod Stratum VII has incised fingers applied to the sides of the seat and an unidentifiable, applied protrusion in the center of the seat (fig. 3.8:1). It is possible (at least at Ashdod) that during the Iron Age II, the 'Ashdoda' type merged with the traditional Canaanite clay bed models or 'offering tables,' found both before and after the Iron Age I in the southern Levant (see Holland 1977: 154; Brug 1985: 186). In the late variant, the body becomes very short, and may lack a head (as Yasur-Landau noted, 2001: 337, n. 61; see also Schmitt 1999: 611).

The clay of the 'Ashdoda' figurines does not differ from the clay used for Philistine Bichrome or other Iron I pottery: it is reddish-brown with a gray core and quartz and limestone inclusions. This is in contrast to the Psi-type figurines, some of which are made of the fine calcareous clay typical of fine Monochrome pottery.

It seems that 'Ashdoda' figurines do not occur in the earliest stage of the Philistine occupation (the Ashdod XIII, Ekron VII, and Ashkelon Grid 38

<sup>19</sup> It should be noted the crossed straps or X on the front of female figurines is also a common motif in Bronze Age Syria, but there it is made by incised or plastic decoration (see, e.g., examples from Hama: Badre 1980: pl. 3:67–68, 70). As this motif appears on Philistine figurine types, I believe the more immediate connection is with the Aegean examples.

<sup>20</sup> This type is labeled *kourotrophos* in the Aegean and appears mostly before LH IIIC; see Furumark 1941: 87; Mylonas 1956; French 1971: 142–4.

Phase 20 horizon – see table 1). The earliest secure appearance is Ashdod Stratum XII or XI, Stratum V at Ekron, and in Phase 18 at Ashkelon Grid 38 (see Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: fig. 9). Thus, they do not appear in the earliest (Monochrome) stage, but rather only with Philistine Bichrome pottery (and perhaps only in its advanced stage), continuing subsequently (at least at Ashdod) through the Late Iron Age I and into the Iron Age IIA–IIB–C, though in a somewhat different form. The distribution of this type is also much wider, including examples from Tel Qasile (Mazar 1986: fig. 6:1), Tell es-Safi/Gath (Schmitt 1999: 611, no. 64), Gezer (Dever, Lance, and Wright 1970: pl. 36:3, from a late context; and Dever 1986: pl. 62:18), Tel Batash (Mazar 2006a: 253, photo 107, pl. 82:15; an ‘Ashdoda’ head from a Stratum V–IV fill), Tell Hamid (Wolff 1998: 782, fig. 18), Aphek (Beck and Kochavi 1993: 68; Yasur-Landau 2002: 413; Gadot 2006: 31; Guzowska and Yasur-Landau 2009: 392–3, figs. 11.9–11.11), Beth Shemesh (Grant 1934: pl. 23: lower left), and possibly Tell Judeideh (Schmitt 1999: 611, no. 65); there is probably an example from Jerusalem as well (Gilbert-Peretz 1996: 39, type E1, fig. 18:11, pl. 9:8–9).

Western parallels for the seated female figurine come mostly from the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE or earlier, found on Cyprus, made in Base Ring style (e.g., Dothan 1982: 234, pl. 22; Begg 1991: 63, type II.4; Karageorghis 1993: 13–14, pl. 10) and among Mycenaean figurines (see, e.g., Mylonas 1956; French 1971: 167–72, fig. 14; Dothan 1982: 234, pls. 20–21; Weber-Hiden 1990: pls. 49–50). These parallels show seated females with their body attached to or combined with the chair (e.g., Nilsson 1968: 305, fig. 149). The Philistine seated figurines – the ‘Ashdoda’ type – appear somewhat later and are different as they more schematically designed. The Aegean examples have three legs and the seat is quite rounded,<sup>21</sup> as opposed to the four-legged, square/rectangular Philistine seat. Moreover, in the Aegean the figure is usually made separately and attached to the seat at a single point; decorated, empty seats are common in the Aegean LH IIIB–C as well (e.g., French 1971: 172–4). It seems quite possible that the shape of the ‘Ashdoda’ seat was influenced by the Canaanite tradition of clay bed models/offering tables, combining an Aegean and Canaanite concept.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, this type is included in the corpus of Aegean-style figurines, due to basic morphological similarities with the Mycenaean seated figurines. Such seated figurines are unknown in the Canaanite tradition and are strongly linked to Aegean iconography and cultic symbolism (Rehak 1995; Yasur-Landau 2001, 2008).

<sup>21</sup> The three legs could represent a special type of stool, possibly used as a goddess’s throne or as an altar model (Mylonas 1956: 118–19).

<sup>22</sup> As noted, in Cyprus seated figurines also appear and were suggested to be the main prototype for the ‘Ashdoda’ figurines (Sherratt 1998: 302). It should be noted, however, that the Cypriot figurines have the physical details characteristic of Late Cypriot female figurines (such as a wide head, incised mouth, hands on the belly, and emphasized genitalia), while the ‘Ashdoda’ figurines lack them entirely.

Moreover, additional Mycenaean-style iconographic details appear both in the shaping and the decoration of these figurines (see also Press 2007: 206–10). Thus, the ‘Ashdoda’ figurine may reflect a blending of Aegean form and concepts with influences of local Canaanite traditions, resulting in a characteristically ‘Philistine’ end-product.

*Summary.* The recent excavations at Ashkelon and Ekron have added about 60 items to the assemblage of Aegean-style figurines from Iron Age Philistia, previously made up of examples almost exclusively from Ashdod. When examining this much larger assemblage, it is apparent that only three clear types of Aegean-style figurines are evident: the standing Psi-type female figurine, the seated ‘Ashdoda’-type female figurine, and decorated bovine figurines (discussed further below, figs. 3.52–3.53). Other forms, such as the mourning figurines and male figurines rarely, if at all, appear. The main types appear in different variants and fabrics, and become more distant from their Aegean prototypes over the course of the Iron Age, with the ‘Ashdoda’ type alone possibly continuing into the Iron Age II. The style of the figurines from Philistia shows various connections to the LH IIIC tradition in the Aegean region, but also to LC III Cyprus. In some cases, a unique Philistine style evolved, yet it seems that, on a whole, the relevant Cypriot examples were also derived from Aegean prototypes, justifying the use of, the term ‘Aegean-style’ for these Philistine figurines. Given this development, along with the fact that evidence from many LH IIIC sites is still unpublished, it is difficult to trace a single stylistic source for these figurines. They may well represent a mixture of styles. While the typical Aegean forms of the figurines gradually disappear or merge into local style, distinct (iconographic or stylistic) components persist in the coroplastic human depictions of Philistia throughout the Iron Age (see below, section 3.1.2). The figurines probably reflect domestic, popular cultic practices, both in Philistia and the Aegean, as attested to in both find-context and form. In the case of the Philistines, it seems that we are dealing with practices brought to Philistia by individual immigrants rather than by a centralized urban religious establishment. Most of the religious components of the figurines, reflected in their posture and details of dress, do not persist into the Iron Age II as the Philistine society and its material culture becomes more closely linked to the local Canaanite-Levantine culture (see further discussion in Chapter 4).

### 3.1.1.2. *Human depictions on decorated pottery*

Human depictions on Philistine pottery are very rare. The most substantial evidence comes from a Philistine Bichrome krater found at Ashkelon (fig. 3.12; Wachsman 1998: 131–3; Stager 2006a: 15, photo on p. 16, 2006b: 173–4, fig. 5; Stager and Mountjoy 2007; Stager, Schloen and Master 2008: 271, fig. 15.40). This depiction is rather complex and apparently shows a scene including schematic figures, a dolphin, a bird and other geometric motifs.



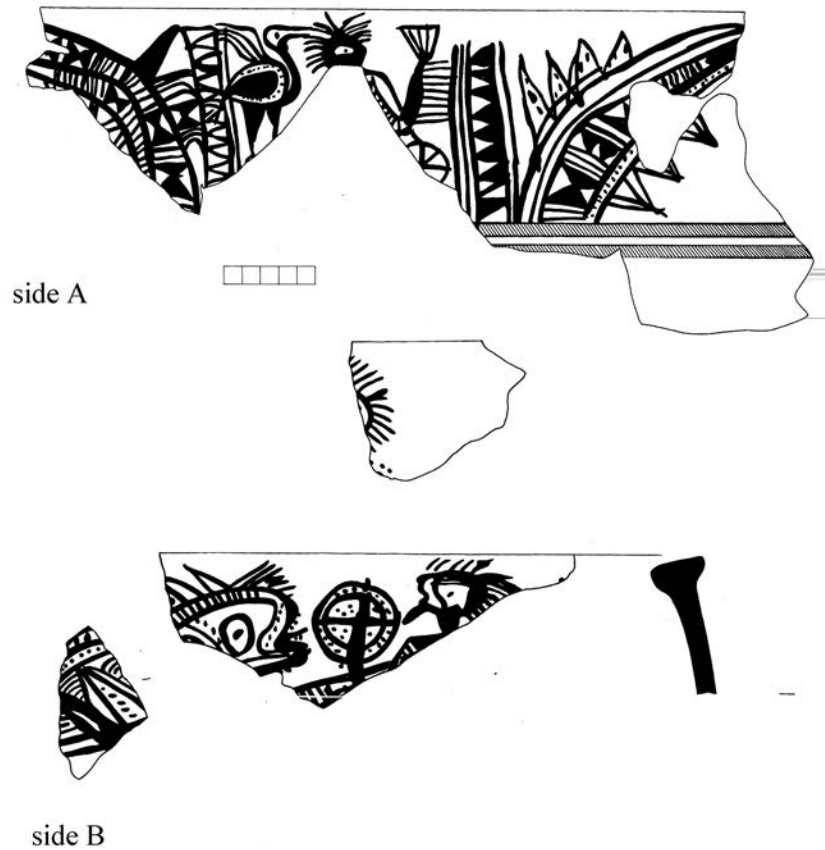


Figure 3.12. A pictorial Philistine Bichrome krater from Ashkelon (after Stager, Schloen and Master 2008: fig. 15.40; courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon).

The vessel is a typical, large Philistine bell-shaped krater. On one side, which was preserved to a larger extent (fig. 3.12: side A), there is a seated figure and a standing bird, delimited with two vertical motifs of vertical lines and triangles between them. The figure is very schematically illustrated from the profile, with only the head and a hand preserved. The head is black with no facial details other than a large eye; from the top of the head, there are protruding spikes, either a typical Aegean representation of long hair or hair dress (Stager and Mountjoy 2007: side B, references therein) or a type of helmet or hat. The figure is apparently seated, probably on a chariot, as a wheel is presented under it. Moreover, the hand seems to be represented to the right of the figure, apparently holding a cup or a vessel (according to Stager and Mountjoy 2007, this is either a depiction of a large hand, a kylix or a lyre held by the figure). To the left of the figure, a bird is standing; its legs are rather

large and thick compared to most typical Philistine bird representations (see below); it is facing forward, and the wing is depicted schematically. On both sides of the delimited scene, outward-pointed, 'horned' streamers or tongues are depicted, filled with interchanging triangles, triglyphs and the double axe motif. These are either abstract motifs, or may depict parts (the tail or fin) of a certain sea creature; in any case, this is a maritime motif in its nature (possibly representing waves in the sea). Only a relative small fragment of the other side of the krater is preserved (fig. 3.12: side B; Stager and Mountjoy 2007: side A; Stager, Schloen and Master 2008: Side B). The fragment illustrates the head of a figure facing LEFT (and possibly its shoulder and hand), the head of a large fish and a round symbol in between them. In another small fragment also assigned to this side of the krater (but not adjoining) a fragmentary head with spiking hair (similar to the figure on side A) is seen. The profile of the head shown is even more schematic than the figure on side A, with protruding spiked hair, a dotted eye and a long pointed nose. The neck and probably the right shoulder are depicted. The fish has a large head with spikes depicted from the top, with a protruding mouth, and a very large eye. This is probably an unusual depiction of a dolphin (on account of the shape of the head). The rounded motif between the fish and the person is possibly held in the right hand of the human figure. In another fragment, probably belonging to the same side of the krater (again, not adjoining), a fragment of a 'horned' streamer or tongue is seen, possibly part of the lower part of the fish/dolphin's body.

While this scene has no exact parallels either in the Philistine or Aegean world, the style and motifs are influenced by Mycenaean iconography; yet, the composition is unique and exceptionally grotesque. Stager and Mountjoy (2007) have interpreted the scene on Side B as a feathered warrior/sailor confronting a dolphin (Stager and Mountjoy 2007:55, figs. 6, 11), or, possibly a fish eating a drowned sailor. The composition on Side A was interpreted by Stager and Mountjoy as representing some sort of a funerary scene combining the details of the death at sea and the funerary procession and feast (mainly on account of parallels to the larnax), with a bird viewing the procession. In addition, another maritime scene is depicted from the side (Stager and Mountjoy 2007: 59; see also Yasur-Landau 2008: 219 for the connection between birds and funerals in the Aegean world and references therein; see also Matthäus 2005). Yasur-Landau, however, interprets the seated figure on this krater as representing an Aegean type of seated goddess (Yasur-Landau 2008: 220). This interpretation may be more reasonable in light of other similar depictions in Philistia, such as the 'Ashdoda' seated figurines and the seated figures on the seal from Ashdod (fig. 3.14; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 165–6, fig. 3.66). While the wheel on the bottom may be problematic for this interpretation, there are examples which may support such a theory, such as the pithos from a grave at Knossos, with standing goddesses on a wheeled platform, with birds overhead (Matthäus 2005: 328, fig. 17). Thus, it is possible that seating could have been depicted on such platforms



(or carts) in other occasions. The iconography of this object indicates a possible mixture of Mycenaean, Minoan and Cypriote styles. With an only fragmentarily preserved item, one lacking good parallels, it seems that at this stage these or any other interpretations should be treated with caution. While some of the motifs conform with typical Philistine decorative motifs (especially the geometric ones), other elements are either unique, or are depicted in a different manner than usually found. Yet the Ashkelon krater clearly shows new aspects and connections between the iconography created by the Philistines and various authentic Aegean iconographic motifs, and the depictions on it will probably be subject to further interpretation in the future.

A Philistine Monochrome sherd from Ashkelon shows the feet of a figure standing on a ship's (bird-shaped?) post (fig. 3.13:1, Wachsmann 2000:131–5, fig. 6.29; Stager and Mountjoy 2007: 57, fig. 10). A Monochrome sherd from Ekron may also depict a ship (fig. 3.13:2; Dothan and Zukerman 2004:41, fig. 35:10; Mountjoy 2005, 2006; on the depictions of ships in the Philistine culture and their importance see below and Wachsmann 1998:177–97; 2000; Yasur-Landau 2008, especially in connection with an associated bird motif; see also López-Bertran, Garcia-Ventura and Krueger 2008 on later depictions of ships in the first millennium BCE Mediterranean and their significance). Although few, the ship depictions add to the distinctive 'maritime' characteristic of Philistine iconography.

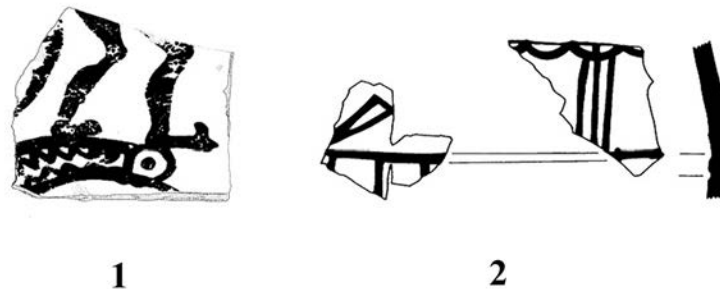


Figure 3.13. Sherds with depictions of ships from Ekron and Ashkelon (courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon).

A strainer-spouted jug from Megiddo that may be related to the Philistine style (see Loud 1948: pl. 76:1; Dothan 1982: 150–51, fig. 28; Yasur-Landau 2008, the 'Orpheus Jug') has a more detailed figurative scene showing a procession of a musician playing the lyre and a horse, gazelle, birds and two fish, crabs and a tree. As the connection of this vessel to the Philistine assemblage is rather questionable (see Yasur-Landau 2008), it will not be discussed further. Otherwise, as noted, the figurative depictions on Philistine pottery are limited to animals, namely birds and fish, and some vegetative motifs, such as the tree and the lotus (figs. 3.74–3.75, 3.86–3.87 below). The face of a

figure is drawn on a red slipped sherd from Ashdod (Dothan 1971: fig. 60:8), and while this is a surface find, the fabric and style indicate that it may date to the Iron Age. Other human depictions with certain Aegean affinities are the figures depicted on a cylinder seal from Ashdod (fig. 3.14) and will be discussed below.

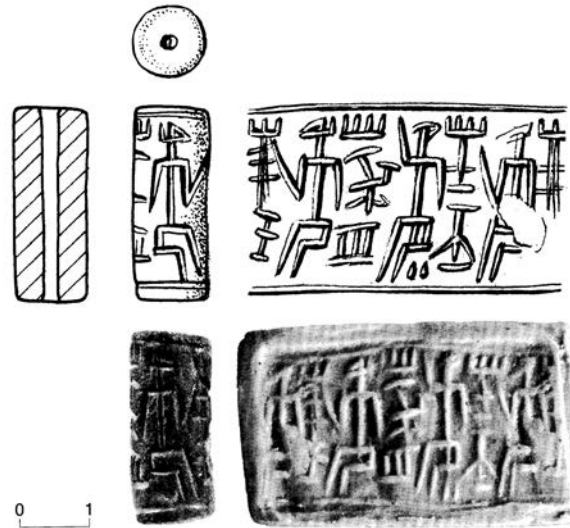


Figure 3.14. A cylinder seal from Ashdod with seated figures (after Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: fig. 3.66; courtesy of IAA).

### 3.1.2. *Philistine and hybrid style*

This section describes various figurative depictions appearing mostly on terracottas in Philistia during the late Iron Age I and Iron Age II. These depictions usually show a mixture of iconographic elements, including Aegean-Philistine, local Canaanite and others. Many examples come from the Iron Age II levels of Ashdod (most well known is the ‘Musicians’ stand’) and the newly discovered assemblage of the favissa at Yavneh (Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel 2006; Ziffer and Kletter 2007); additional items come from Tel Qasile and other sites. Some of these items could be classified as terracottas or figurines, but these are often not independent objects and are part of larger compositions, such as stands or architectural models.

#### 3.1.2.1. *Terracottas*

Anthropomorphic vessels from Philistia are very few, and therefore their stylistic development cannot be followed. The complete anthropomorphic vessel from Tel Qasile depicting a standing female (fig. 3.15:1, Mazar 1980:

78–81; fig. 18) may be considered a Philistine object on account of certain resemblances to Aegean female figures (Dothan 1982: 231; Mazar 1980: 80–1, references therein; Mazar 2000: 225). However, as opposed to most Mycenaean vessels, this is a libation vessel, as the breasts are pierced. It is possible that certain Cypriot White Painted bottles resemble this vessel (J. Karageorghis 1977: 121–3, pl. 20:d), yet, the stylistic similarities are not strong in any case. Therefore, this unique vessel may be considered as representing a mixture of Canaanite and Philistine styles: the modeling of the face and the gesture of the hands under the breasts could reflect Canaanite tradition, while the general shape of the vessel, its decoration and the pendant on the chest may indicate Aegean or Cypriote influence (see Mazar 1980: 80–81). A fragment of a hollow figure or an anthropomorphic vessel comes from Iron Age IIB Ekron (ca. 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE, Stratum III – fig. 3.15:2; Ben-Shlomo 2006a: 68, fig. 1.33:10); it is decorated in LPDW style (see p. 26), with typical red, vertically burnished slip and black and white painted bands. It is comprised of a wheel made body (which was probably 5–6 cm in diameter) with an arm and a breast applied to it. The arm, with incised fingers, is holding the breast. The fragment from Ekron could have come from a female-shaped libation vessel similar to the one from Tel Qasile. Yet, the depiction of the arm supporting the breast may have a general resemblance to Judean and Canaanite female figurines of the Iron Age (e.g., Kletter 1996: 28–30; Kletter 2001).

An object from Ashdod Stratum VII, north of the Area M gate (fig. 3.15:4; Dothan and Porath 1982: 37–8, fig. 25:3, pl. 22:1) should also be considered in this light. This is a hollow stand, figurine or vessel in the shape of a woman holding one hand on its right breast and the other on its stomach. This posture could also be considered typically Canaanite or ‘Astarte-like’. The face, however is not typically Canaanite, as it is modeled by hand, flattened and includes a prominent nose. The line connecting the bulging back of the head with the ears is peculiar, possibly aiming to depict a certain hairdo or jewelry. The modeling of the face is not very different from the above-mentioned vessel from Tel Qasile and may also recall depictions from the Edomite shrine at Qitmit (Beck 1995: 45, 70, figs. 3.17, 3.42, though these depictions are of men). On the other hand, the decoration includes vertically burnished thick red slip which is typical of LPDW (similar to fig. 3.15:2 from Ekron). The object may have been used as an incense burner, a stand or some sort of anthropomorphic vessel used for libation. A complete juglet with a human face on its neck was found at Tel Qasile, with parallels from Ashdod (fig. 3.15:3), Gezer, Beth Shemesh and other sites (Mazar 1980: 81–2, fig. 19, references therein); some of these probably depict bearded males. These objects should be considered to be of Iron Age southern Levantine type, yet, the style of the facial details recalls Aegean-style figurines (such as the pinched nose and applied pellet eyes). A kernos-flask vessel with a human face on its neck (fig. 3.15:5, obj. no. 5011), found in Ekron Field IV lower Stratum VIA, should also be mentioned. The face has two applied

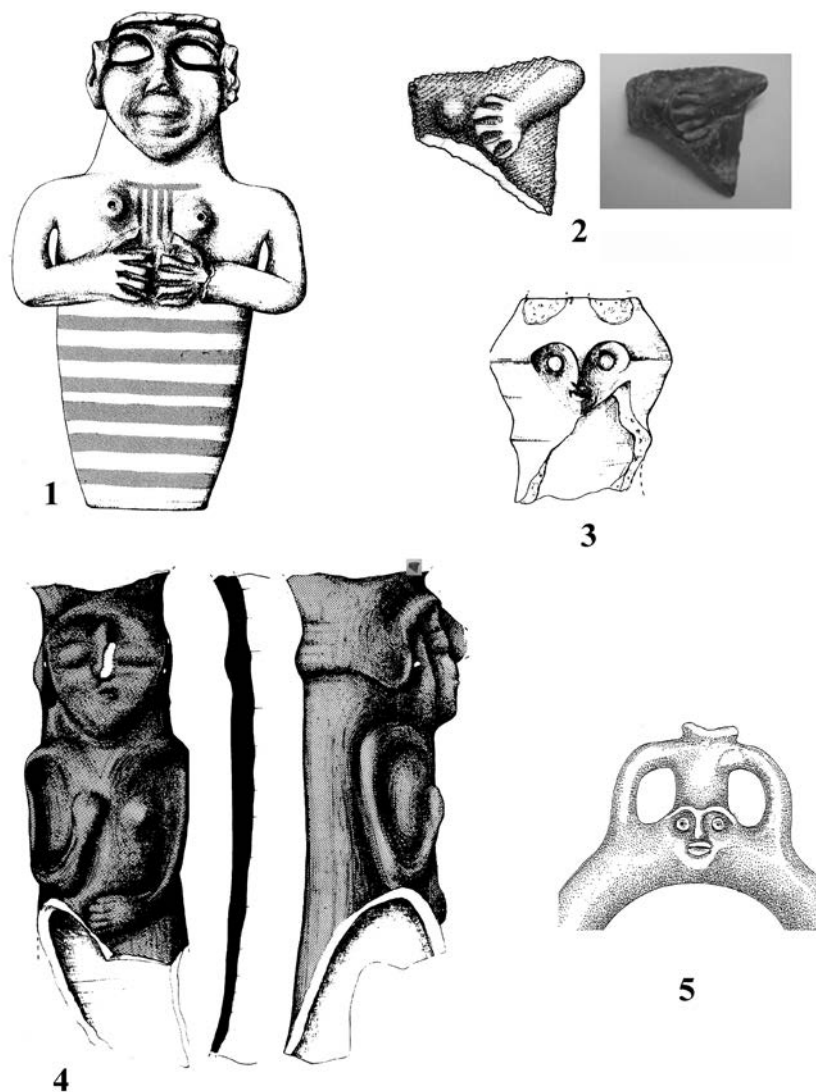


Figure 3.15. Anthropomorphic vessels from Philistia.

eyes with perforations for pupils, eyebrows in relief, a protruding pinched nose, an applied mouth with parted lips, and a modeled chin. Similar vessels may come from Gezer (Macalister 1912: pl. 161:3), as well as several vessel necks with human depiction from unstratified contexts at Ashdod (e.g., fig. 3.15:3; Dothan 1971: fig. 65:6–9). A spoon-flask with a human, female depiction was published from the Moshe Dayan Collection, attributed to Azor (Ornan 1986: 32, no. 9).

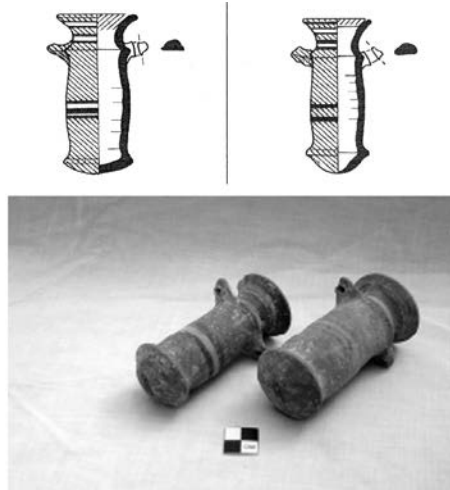


Figure 3.16. Elongated pottery vessels from Gath  
(after Maeir 2007: fig. 1).

Aren Maeir has suggested that a group of small elongated pottery vessels found in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE contexts at Gath (with some of these found in a cultic corner) are in fact depictions of phalli (fig. 3.16; Maeir 2007: 25–9, fig. 3). These vessels are elongated containers decorated in the LPDW style (Ben-Shlomo, Shai and Maeir 2004; Ben-Shlomo 2006a: 68). Maeir also identified the bronze *situlae* bottles from Ashkelon (Maeir 2007: fig. 1) in the same way. He further discusses the importance of the symbolism of the phallus in the Philistine culture and especially relates the term ‘*ophalim*’ (appearing in the story of the taking of the ark to Philistia in 1 Sam. 5–6) to the male sexual organ (Maeir 2007: 30–2). It is suggested that phallic objects played a role in the cult practice of a certain Philistine goddess (hence the term “golden ‘*ophalim*’” from 1 Sam. 5). It should be further noted in this context that the Philistines are specifically described in the biblical texts as an uncircumcised people (see also King 2006: 337–9; Faust 2006). While the vessels from Gath may depict circumcised phalli (on account of their rather flat ends), if these objects depict erect penises, the difference between circumcised and uncircumcised organs would not be visible (Maeir 2007: 28). A possibly clearer example of a phallus may come from an earlier date at Ekron, where a complete elongated object carved from soft limestone possibly depicts a phallus (fig. 3.17, obj. no. 6190). The object is 11 cm in height and 3.5 cm thick, while the top 1.5–2 cm is delineated by a deep horizontal circular incision, thus, creating a depiction resembling a phallus (as suggested above this could depict an erect circumcised or uncircumcised penis). The object may carry remains of brown or red paint. This may be the only Iron Age I phallic depiction from Philistia. While Maeir’s reading of the

details in 1 Sam. 5–6 in light of these objects may be quite appealing, incorporating phallus-shaped objects into the Philistine material culture is still somewhat problematic. The actual interpretation of the objects from Gath is uncertain (they can be simply bottles), and, otherwise, this depiction is very rare; hardly any parallels can be brought from the palatial, post-palatial or late second millennium Aegean region and Cyprus, and these objects do not exist in the Levantine archaeological record. Thus, their isolated appearance (as at Ekron) may be incidental and not bear any relation to specific cultic practices, beliefs or cultural symbolism.

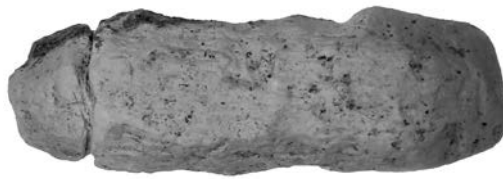


Figure 3.17. A limestone object (phallus?) from Ekron (obj. no. 6190).

*The Musicians' stand.* The 'Musicians' stand' was found in Area H of Ashdod in an open area of Stratum X (figs. 3.18–3.19; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 180–4, figs. 3.78–3.79). The stand was thrown on the wheel as one piece, which included the carinated bowl fitted on the figurative foot, which includes the central register with the 'animal procession'/'frieze' and the lowermost part, accommodating five musicians. In the central portion of the stand, three schematic quadrupeds—their rectangular body, tail, and possibly legs—were incised prior to firing. Two of the animals have heads made by application, with elongated ears, protruding snouts and cheeks; the head of the third animal is incised (though similar). The lowermost portion of the stand is embellished by the figures of five musicians: one of these is cut through in the clay and four are fully plastic. Musician no. 1, playing a double flute, is the largest figure, situated just below a gap in the animal frieze, and technically different from nos. 2–5. This musician may represent the chief musician and served as the central axis of the scene. Ziffer and Kletter (2007: 25, note 196; see also Paz 2007: 68–71) have suggested that this figure represents the god *Bes*, the patron of music and dancing. Musician nos. 2–5 were separately modeled and then fitted within the cut windows: Musician no. 2 holds two small cymbals, as his large detailed head boasts a prominent nose and dons a hat or tiara, although it may well be a depiction of a headdress extending to the neck. Musician no. 3 holds a lyre in his left hand, playing it with his right (possibly using a plectrum); the lyre has a rounded base and two pointed edges on the top. The bareheaded figure has a prominent nose and ears. Musician no. 4 also plays a double flute at a 180° angle from the first flute player. Musician no. 5 is a tambourine player, wearing a hat or headdress, and with a very prominent nose. All the figures



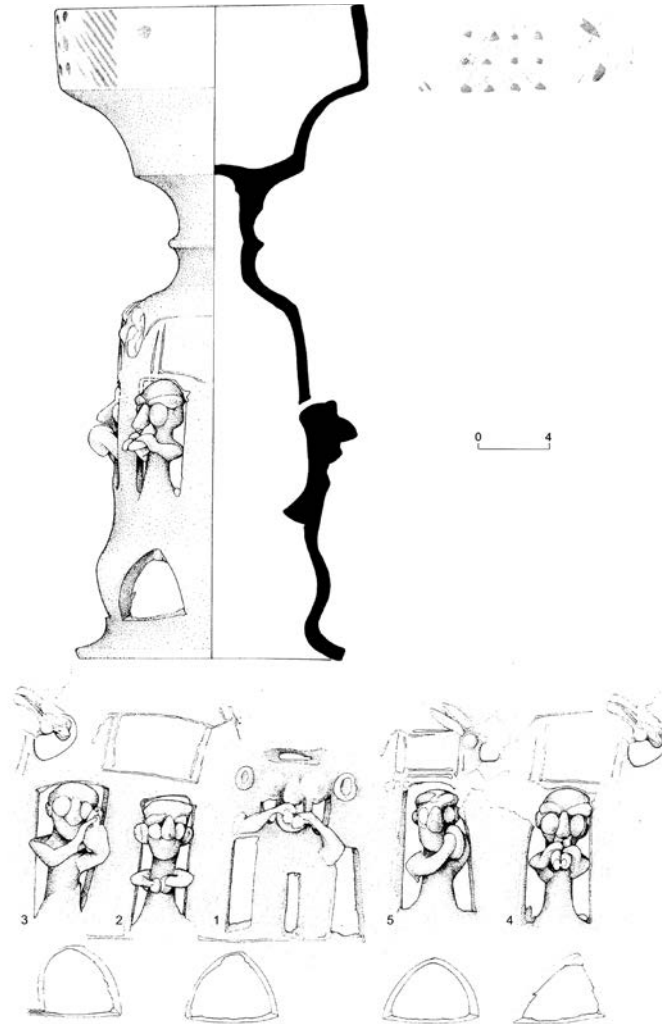


Figure 3.18. The 'Musicians' stand' from Ashdod  
(after Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: fig. 3.76; courtesy of IAA).

have ears that are very far apart and prominent noses, similar to the modeling of the 'Ashdoda' figurines. Musicians nos. 2 and 4 have prominent applied eyebrows, while nos. 2–5 have applied pellet eyes; none of the mouths are depicted, and it is possible that all the figures represent bearded males (see also Paz 2007: 69).

The musicians of the Ashdod stand are modeled in a similar way as the 'Ashdoda' figurines, while the instruments they play bring to mind Iron Age II Phoenician and Judean figurines. These latter figurines depict women play-





Figure 3.19. The ‘Musicians’ stand’ from Ashdod (courtesy of IAA).

ing the tambourine, flute or cymbals (Meyers 1991; Stern 2001: fig. I.42; Paz 2007), and are well-known in Iron Age iconography (Kletter 1996: 31,36, figs. 7:7, 8, 9:2–3; Paz 2007: fig. 2.4). Lyre players are also depicted on a seal from Ashdod (fig. 3.22:2; Dothan 1971: fig. 76:1) and a figurine from Area D at Ashdod (fig. 3.22:1; Dothan 1971: fig. 62:1). The lyre depictions from Ashdod are all quite similar. A figurine of a double flute player from the Bible Lands Museum (Schmitt 1999: 624, Kat. no. 96) warrants mention as well. Thus, the iconography of the ‘Musicians’ stand’ has both Philistine-Aegean and Canaanite-Phoenician characteristics (see also Paz 2007: 99–100).

The stand from Ashdod is a rare depiction of a complete ensemble of musicians from the Iron Age (Paz 2007: 50, 68–71), now paralleled to some extent at Yavneh. The musicians depicted on a house model from the favissa at Yavneh are quite similar (fig. 3.24; Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 24–5, 70–75, no. 1036; see below), while the stand from Temple 131 at Tel Qasile depicts a group of dancers (fig. 3.20, Mazar 1980: 87–9, fig. 23) and is also made using the same technique. Note that such depictions of human processions, appearing now several times in Philistia, are quite rare on earlier Canaanite cultic stands (Mazar 1980: 88). There are no other known parallels for a musical procession on a stand or on any other type of pottery vessel (see, e.g., Braun 1999: 131–7). However, a four-walled stone prism from the Dayan collection has a procession of lyre and double flute players (Keel and Uehlinger 1998:

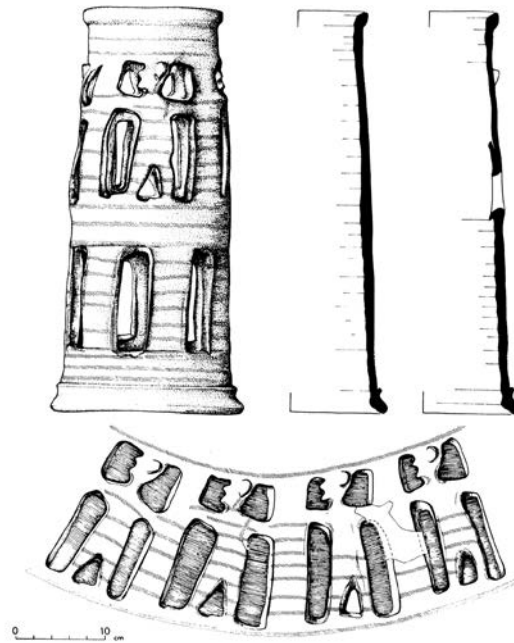


Figure 3.20. A stand with dancers from Tel Qasile  
(after Mazar 1980: fig. 23).

301, nos. 299–300), related to the cult of the moon god; a procession of musicians is also depicted on a bronze stand from Cyprus (Buchholz and Karageorghis 1973: 158, no. 1686). The stand may thus be interpreted as a cultic stand used for offerings or libations (placed in the bowl), and its musical theme may possibly reflect the nature of the cult. Another possibility would be that it is a ‘model shrine’ (see stands at Yavneh, such as fig. 3.24, and Beth Shean, Rowe 1940: 52–6, pls. LVI–LXI); the musicians would then be participants in a temple scene, standing in the doorway/window of the temple. This interpretation would then explain the rare composition of the poised musicians. As there are no soot marks on the stand we can safely presume that it was not used as an incense burner, though it could have served for libations, furnishing cultic meals or as a symbolic object buried and left unused. The relationship between musicians and cult and temples is referred to in the Old Testament: musical instruments mentioned include cymbals, lyres, harps, tambourines and trumpets (e.g., 1 Chr. 13:8, 15:16, 19, 25:1, 6; 2 Chr. 5:12–13; for the ‘Canaanite orchestra’, see Paz 2007: 98–101). These instruments, associated with prophets, priests and Levites, facilitated the emergence into an ecstatic state. For example, note that the passage describing the anointment and prophecy of Saul specifies a group of prophets playing the flute, lyre, tambourine and harp (1 Sam. 10).

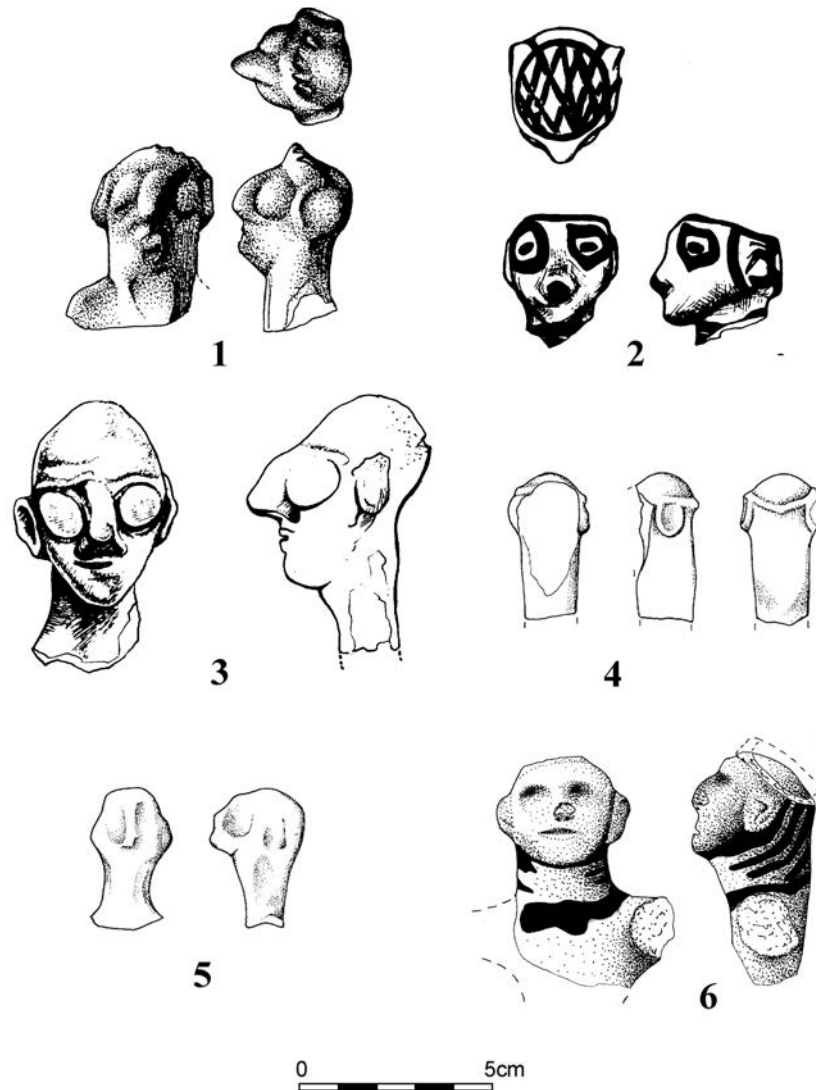


Figure 3.21. Various figurine heads from Ashdod and Ashkelon.

Various heads with convex tops and prominent noses that were found at Iron Age II Ashdod and in other unclear or unstratified contexts in Philistia are possibly of male figurines (figs. 3.21; Dothan and Freedman 1967: fig. 47:5; Dothan 1971: figs. 62:7–8, 63:1; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 224, figs. 3.103:1, 3.115:7; see Schmitt 1999: 619–22, type IV). Several other terracottas from sites in Philistia, such as Tel Batash, Stratum V (Mazar 2006a: 253, photo 107, pl. 82:15), Gezer (noted above, fig. 3.23:1, Macalister 1912:

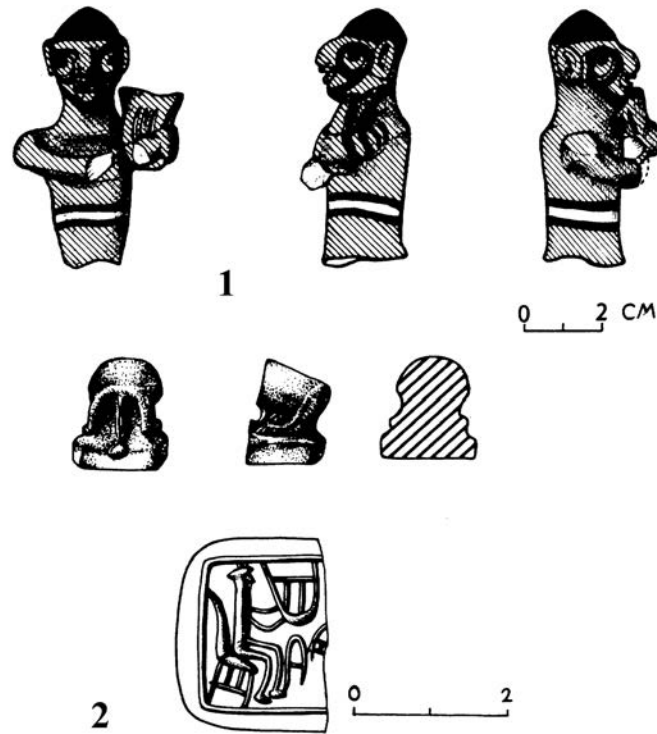


Figure 3.22. Depictions of harp players from Ashdod (after Dothan 1971; courtesy of IAA).

fig. 271) and Gath (fig. 3.23:2, Dothan 1982: 227–8, fig. 4.5, pl.12) are also similar, and may depict males. A head from Ashkelon (fig. 3.21:6, Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: 57, fig. 15:2) is somewhat tilted upward; it has an applied nose with perforated nostrils, an incised mouth and large ears; the top of the head is convex with an uplifted ridge, perhaps depicting a headdress or tiara (as suggested by the painted decoration). The decoration includes horizontal bands on the neck and below it (possibly portraying a hat strap), and vertical stripes on both sides of the back of the neck. While the headdress and the chin strap may indicate a typical Mycenaean female depiction (see above), Mycenaean depictions of males in clay appear, although rarely (e.g., French 1985: 223–30). Somewhat similar Iron Age figurine heads come from Ashdod (Dothan and Freedman 1967: fig. 26:3), Afula (Dothan 1955: 41, fig. 15:19, pl. VI:1) and Khirbet Sitt Leila (Zephath, Aharoni 1959: fig. 1).

Several of the examples above show certain Aegean affinities, such as the applied pellet eyes (figs. 3.21:1,3,5, 3.23), protruding nose (fig. 3.21:1,3), birdlike face (fig. 3.21:5), and concave head top (fig. 3.21:4,6). Particularly

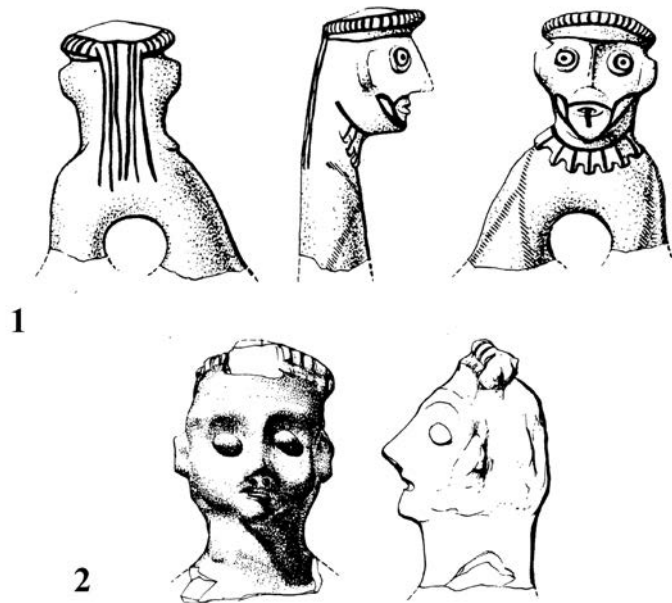


Figure 3.23. Figurine heads from Gezer and Gath  
(after Dothan 1982: figs. 1:2, 5).

important is the hat/headdress and the modeling of the head (as fig. 3.23), with parallels from male figurines at Phylakopi (French 1985: 223–30, fig. 6.12–14). In one example, there is a hatched pattern on the top of the head (fig. 3.21:2). Some examples of male figurines from Cyprus during the LCII–III and later (Karageorghis 1993: 31–2, pl. 19:1–2) show similar features as well. These items may reflect a continuation of Philistine iconographic style during the Iron Age II.

A figurine (or part of a larger composition) depicting a harp player was found in an unstratified context at Ashdod (fig. 3.22:1; Dothan 1971: fig. 62:1). A conical cap covering the head and the eyes are painted in black (see the cap of fig. 3.21:2), with the detailed harp held in both hands. The figurine is decorated in the typical LPDW style, with red burnished slip and white and black bands. Male figurines from Iron Age Amman are quite similar (Dornemann 1983: 139, fig. 87:1–2). Note, that the motif of harp/lyre player occurs several times in Philistia (as in the ‘Musicians’ stands’ at Ashdod and Yavneh and the seals from Ashdod and Tel Batash – see above and below). The lyre depictions from Ashdod are all similar to each other and, together with a lyre player on a seal from Tel Batash (Mazar 2006b: 240–41, pl. 67:21), may be regarded as a ‘Philistine type’ of ‘round-based’ lyre (Lawergren 1998: 56, fig. 5). The appearance of this motif with the Late Philistine decorative style may indicate strong connections to Philistine traditions; the depiction of the

face seems to resemble examples from Cyprus (Karageorghis 1993: 30–32, figs. 15, 17, though these are dated earlier to the Late Cypriote II–III) and Iron Age Amman (Dornemann 1983: 139, fig. 87:1–3).

*The stands from the Yavneh Favissa.* Recently, a large assemblage of cult objects was discovered in a salvage excavation near Tel Yavneh, which revealed a pit that was apparently used as a favissa (a depository of cultic furnishing) of a nearby temple, probably at Tel Yavneh (Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel 2006; Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 6–8). This favissa contained over 120 terracotta house models or cultic stands rich with human, animal, vegetative and architectural motifs, as well as other cult vessels (mainly chalices and shovels). Notably, there are hardly any free-standing figurines or figurative vessels of any kind in this assemblage. Although pending detailed publication (the finds from the favissa were partly published in Ziffer and Kletter 2007, and are soon to be published in a final report – Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel forthcoming), this assemblage most likely dates to the late Iron Age IIA (late 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE). The assemblage is located in the heart of Philistia, yet not in one of the main Philistine cities, and is clearly the most important evidence for Iron Age II iconography in Philistia thus far. This assemblage will probably induce extensive studies and publications in the future, and will only be discussed here briefly in the framework of the previously known Iron Age iconographic depictions of Philistia. This assemblage is also important due to new and detailed depictions of architectural elements in the Iron Age (this aspect will not be fully developed here).



Figure 3.24. A cultic stand with musicians from Yavneh (no. 2006-1016; photograph: Leonid Padrul).

Other elements fixed within this architectural context and are usually modeled rather crudely. Human figures, mostly female, are depicted on many of the stands (figs. 3.24–3.28; Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 17–8). The figures



are usually standing, in several cases on animals (fig. 3.26; as nos. 2006-1046, 2006-1047, 2006-1043). In other cases, the animals, lions or bulls, are depicted in the lower corners of the model (as fig. 3.25, no. 200-1036); in this case the interpretation is a depiction of a facade of a temple which is supported by the animals (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 24). The female figures are often holding or supporting their breasts (figs. 3.26, 3.29), which is a typical Canaanite and Judean figurine posture. In one case, the female figures depicted are holding the vulva open with their hands (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 21, no. 2006-1055); this posture is also known in the Canaanite tradition. Notably, distinct male depictions do appear on the stands. Nevertheless, the details of the modeling of the figures is in most cases quite similar to the hand-made Aegean-style figurines with the prominent nose, pellet eyes, lack of mouth and flat top of the head (figs. 3.24–3.25; Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 17, nos. 2006-1047, 2006-1035, 2006-1022); only in a few cases does it resemble Judean ‘pillar figurines’ (fig. 3.29; Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 22–3, 2006-998).



Figure 3.25. A cultic stand from Yavneh with a musician (no. 2006-1022; photograph: Leonid Padrul).

A group of musicians appears on one of the stands (fig. 3.24; Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 24–5, no. 2006-1036) and shows similarities to the Ashdod ‘Musicians’ stand’ (figs. 3.18–3.19) in the general composition, in the instruments depicted and in the modeling of the figures. Another stand (fig. 3.25) includes one female, probably playing a flute, with two overriding animals to its left (possibly a lion attacking its prey), and another flute player on the narrow face of the stand, sitting on a balcony with its legs swaying below (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: no. 2006-1022). Ziffer sees this scene as possibly representing some kind of hunting scene, such as an ‘Orpheus-like’ narrative (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 26, 79–82). According to this opinion, the figures sitting



Figure 3.26. A cultic stand from Yavneh with females on lions (no. 2006-1046; photograph: Leonid Padrul).



Figure 3.27. A cultic stand from Yavneh with sphinx (no. 2006-1000; photograph: Leonid Padrul).

on the balconies (in this and other stands) may recall earlier Minoan depictions, as in wall paintings at Akrotiri (I. Ziffer, personal communication). Schematic sphinxes appear on two stands (fig. 3.27; Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 20–21, nos. 2006-1000, 2006-986); they have an unusual appearance, with elongated forearms (maybe echoing the biblical *cherubim*, as in Ez. 1:5–12), protruding breasts and are interpreted as female sphinxes (Ziffer and Kletter 2007:47).



Figure 3.28. A cultic stand from Yavneh with females and tree (no. 2006-1040, photograph: Leonid Padrul).



Figure 3.29. A cultic stand from Yavneh (no. 2006-998, photograph: Leonid Padrul).

Bovines predominate the animal depictions on the models (figs. 3.28, 3.63–3.64; Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 19–20, see below). They are often depicted with their prominent horns and cylindrical snout (as fig. 3.63, nos. 2006-1060, 2006-1029; 2006-1016), located in the windows or on the lower corners of the structure. Lions are depicted on seven of the models and always appear on the lower part of the structure, whether to support it or transport it (figs. 3.26, 3.72; Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 18–19, as nos. 2006-992, 2006-1025); these depictions are similar to Iron Age iconography known from other finds in the southern Levant and the entire Near East (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 18–20; see below as well). The depiction of the lions on the stands is usually quite sche-

matic (fig. 3.72), especially compared with the bovine depictions, and only the teeth, nostrils and emphasized tongue are shown. Trees appear on many stands and are either incised (figs. 3.28–3.29; nos. 2006-1054, 2006-1007) or modeled (as nos. 2006-998, 2006-1033 – Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 22–3); these can usually be identified as palm trees. The composition of palms trees, animals and nude female figures (as fig. 3.29, nos. 2006-994, 2006-1033, 2006-1040) is typical within the realm of popular Canaanite iconography, probably symbolizing fertility (see below, section 3.3).

The assemblage from the Yavneh favissa shows a mixture of both Philistine and Canaanite iconographic features in the modeling style of the figures. However, the Canaanite religious themes dominate the representations. For example, there is no trace for an ‘Ashdoda’ figurine or any other Aegean-style type. Nevertheless, the predominance of female images, as well as the depiction of bulls and the popularity of lions definitely accords with the Philistine iconographic tradition. Thus, while the gods (or goddesses) depicted on these objects were probably related to Canaanite and Syrian religion (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 28–9), Philistine religious traditions also had an impact, both on the elements shown and on the manner in which they were modeled.

According to Ziffer, the iconography of the stands indicates that a goddess was worshiped in the Yavneh temple (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 28–9, 47; see Chapter 4). In any case, another important aspect of the Yavneh stands is that they many times represent a rather complete ‘narrative’ (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 26), rather than more segmented and isolated representations of figures, such as other Philistine figurative objects known thus far. These depictions add to the limited corpus of ‘narrative’ scenes known, such as the pictorial krater from Ashkelon (fig. 3.12), the inlay of swimmers from Ekron (see below, fig. 3.43), the inlays from Tell el-Far‘ah (S) (fig. 3.46), the ‘Musicians’ stand’ from Ashdod (fig. 3.18) and various scenes (though mostly partial) on seals and sealings (see below).

Another example of a human depiction comes from a newly excavated Late Iron Age temple at Nahal Patish (P. Nahshoni, personal communication). The figure is a part of the rounded base of an incense burner, and depicts an individual with a similar style as the Ashdod Musicians and some of the applied figures from the Yavneh corpus. Thus, it may also be classified as belonging to the hybrid Philistine style. Another small group of figurines from Philistia that should be mentioned in this section are nude figures from Iron Age I Ashdod (Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005:161, fig. 3.62:5, Stratum XI) and Ashkelon (Press 2007: 111,147, 248–51, fig. 10:3,5), which are most likely females with emphasized genitalia. These are made of coarse clay, and are very crude in their style, which does not seem to recall any cultural tradition noted thus far; yet, they may indicate a certain ‘hybrid’ type which may have parallels from Cyprus (as at Enkomi, Dikaios 1969–1971: pls. 137.5–6, 8; 147.40–41).

### 3.1.2.2. *Bronze linchpins*

The meager evidence for human figurative representations in metal found in Philistia is solely two bronze ‘linchpins’ with figurative heads. One example, which comes from Ekron (fig. 3.30:1; Dothan 1993; Dothan 2002) is 10 cm high and has a square section; it was found in the Stratum IV 350 public building. As the top widens, a double head is depicted, with a perforation through the middle (Dothan 1993: fig. 2). The facial details are identically depicted on both faces, including eyes, nose, mouth and chin and rather large ears. The top of the head widens slightly and is flat. The second example comes from Ashkelon (fig. 3.30:2; Stager 2006b; Stager, Schloen and Master 2008: 306, fig. 15.81, Grid 50, Phase 9, the Philistine Bichrome stage), also from an Iron Age I context. The top of the pin depicts a human head with rounded eyes and a protruding, large nose; the top of the head is concave and widens. At the back of the head, the hair is depicted (instead of the perforation there is a loop attached to the back of the head), while below the head the pin narrows, with a fine applied globular decoration depicting a necklace or possibly a corselet of armor (Stager 2006b: 172). Both depictions of the head tops of the linchpins could possibly represent polos type heads (see Stager 2006b: 171). Thus, the linchpin depictions from Philistia may recall Aegean-style figurines to a certain extent. Stager suggests that an Aegean goddess was depicted on these chariot fittings, in order to protect the chariot and the warriors riding it (Stager 2006b: 172). He even goes one step further and links this evidence with the wheel depicted on the pictorial krater from Ashkelon (see fig. 3.12) as proof for actual Mycenaean type chariots in Philistia (Stager 2006b: 175).

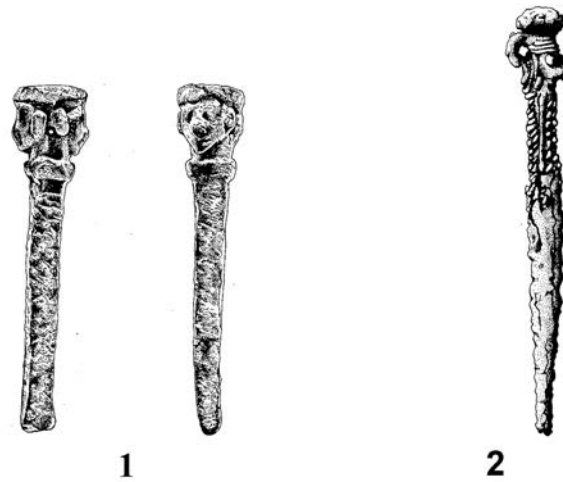


Figure 3.30. Bronze linchpins from Ekron and Ashkelon (courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon).

### 3.1.2.3. *Depictions on seals*

Several Iron Age I seals published from Ashdod, are carved in 'linear' or 'stick figures' style; of these, at least two were interpreted as carrying some sort of linear Philistine/Aegean script (see, e.g., Dothan and Dothan 1992: 153, 167; Stieglitz 1977; Keel 1994a: 21). These include a cylinder seal from Area H, Stratum XI (fig. 3.14; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 165–6, fig. 3.66) with a depiction of seated figures with the right hand raised and certain linear signs between them. These signs were interpreted as Cypro-Minoan signs (for a discussion on the similarity of such signs on Cypriote seals, see, e.g., Smith 2002: 10–19), but could nevertheless be interpreted as iconographic symbols rather than script (see Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 166). The style of carving and motifs may bear Cypriot affinities, recalling seals from Maa-Palaeokastro (Porada 1988: 305, pl. G:4, no. 560) and Kition (Porada 1985: 251, pl. A:2; Karageorghis 1974: pl. 92:293). It was also suggested that the figures depicted represent seated goddesses similar to the 'Ashdoda' figurines (Yasur-Landau 2001). The scene depicted on the seal does indeed seem to be a cultic one, although the posture of the hands is different from the 'Ashdoda' figurines (see parallels for this posture on cylinder seals from the Ashmolean Museum, Buchanan 1966: 191, pl. 60:981–2). Another pyramidal seal from Ashdod Area G, Stratum XII (fig. 3.31:3; Dothan and Porath 1993: 81, fig. 36:9, pl. 48:3) was also interpreted as carrying such signs, though these seem to be linear depictions of quadrupeds (four or five in number, lying in different orientations).

Another interesting example from Iron Age I Ashdod is a pyramidal seal from Area H, Stratum XII (fig. 31:1; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 130–31, fig. 3.41:2) depicting two schematic figures and a bovine head (a bucranium). This motif is also known from Cyprus (Webb 1999: 272, 276–81, figs. 90:1, 91:1–2, 4–5) and may be interpreted as some sort of ceremony involving the two figures, with one of them possibly being a priest and the bucranium symbolizing the worshiped deity. A possibly similar (or other) scene of worship can be seen on a seal impression on a sealing from Ashdod Stratum XII (fig. 3.31:2).

A conical seal from Ashdod Stratum XI depicts a fish and a quadruped (fig. 3.31:4; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 166–7, fig. 3.67), carved in linear style. The fish has a rectangular body with scales (shown using lines on the body). The small schematic quadruped is possibly horned. The fish motif is rare in Levantine glyptics (the fish motif will be further discussed below – section 3.2.7, fig. 3.86). It occurs on an LBII–Iron I scarab from Ashkelon (Keel 1997: 716, no. 70) and on a cylinder seal from Kition (Karageorghis 1974: pl. 92:293). A general similarity in design is also apparent in a seal from Maa-Palaeokastro (Porada 1988: no. 560, pl. G:4). A conical seal depicting a hunting scene with a figure and a horned animal was found in an Iron IIC context at Ashdod, Area K (Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 226, fig. 3.104:9), and is of the Iron I–IIA 'post Ramesside-group' (see below and



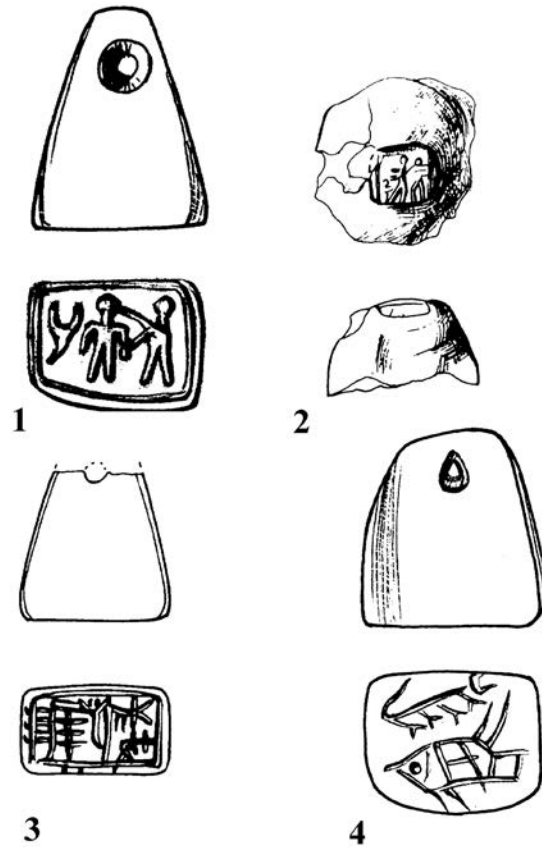


Figure 3.31. Conical seals and a sealing from Ashdod (courtesy of IAA).

Keel 1990b: 341, figs. 9, 10). One should also note a lion shaped seal from Ashdod Stratum X, with a depiction of a harp player on the base (fig. 3.22:2; Dothan 1971: 138–9, fig. 76:1, pl. 69:7). The depiction of the lyre player may resemble Aegean iconography (Yasur-Landau 2002: 232). Other relevant pyramidal seals from Iron I Philistia are an unprovenanced seal attributed to Ashdod (Keel 1994a: 23, figs. 5, 31f), Tel Qasile, Stratum X (Mazar 1951: pl. 36c) and Tel Batash, Stratum V, also depicting a lyre player (Mazar 2006b: 240–41, pl. 67:21; see also Shuval 1990: 116–19). While some of these examples show certain links to Cypriote glyptics (and to the Aegean motif of the seated goddess), they still cannot be seen as a ‘Philistine glyptic style’, and are rather isolated and few in comparison to depictions on seals showing Canaanite or Egyptian influence (see Ben-Shlomo 2006c and below).

### 3.1.3. *Canaanite style*

The Iron Age I depictions as well as the Iron Age II terracottas and other objects described above show various Aegean or Philistine iconographic elements, represented in the style and details of the modeling, while the themes depicted often do not have direct links with Aegean and Cypriote traditions. To a large extent, iconographic representations which show clear Canaanite and Egyptian traditions (both in style and symbolism) follow Late Bronze Age iconographic traditions. These appear side by side with the Aegean and Philistine human iconographic depictions. It seems that these depictions are more common in a restricted group of artifacts (i.e. ivories and seals), and moreover, become more dominant during the later Iron Age. Some of the items defined as ‘Canaanite’ are also termed ‘Phoenician’, and they are also included in this category, since they essentially represent a local style that in many ways continues the Canaanite or Levantine traditions of the second millennium BCE (e.g., Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 158–74; Beck 2000; Yasur-Landau 2008).

#### 3.1.3.1. *Terracottas*

Recently, a terracotta anthropomorphic seated figurine was published from Gath (fig. 3.32; Maeir 2008b). The figurine, about 6 cm in height, was found in Stratum A3, dating to the late 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The top of the head is conic (depicting either a hat or a hair dress) and the chin is protruding, probably depicting a beard. Three pierced holes (made before firing) are located on the top of the head, the groin and between the lower legs. The broken arms are protruding from the shoulders; no other details are seen on the body; the legs are, however, formed in a way that indicates that the figure was sitting on a chair and was probably joined to it using the pierced holes. This is most probably a common Late Bronze Age Canaanite figurine form, with stone and metal examples from important sites like Ugarit and Hazor (Maeir 2008b: 630, and further references therein). These figurines represent either the god 'El or Ba'al, or a royal entity seated on its throne. Because of the lack of details and preservation of this figurine, it is difficult to determine its exact identity and meaning. While in principal, the figurine could have been redeposited from a Late Bronze Age II level, this seems less likely in this area of the tell. The method of applying the figurine to the seat with three pierced holes is exceptional (Maeir 2008b: 631). Maeir suggests that the figurine depicts the Canaanite god El (Maeir 2008b: 631) on account of the seated posture, hands stretched forward, pointed hat or head dress and beard (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 58–60, 118). Thus, this may be a unique representation of a male god in the iconography of Philistia. Moreover, this may be an important indication of the role of this Canaanite god in the Iron Age IIA Philistine religion, which may have already been associated with an existing Philistine deity.

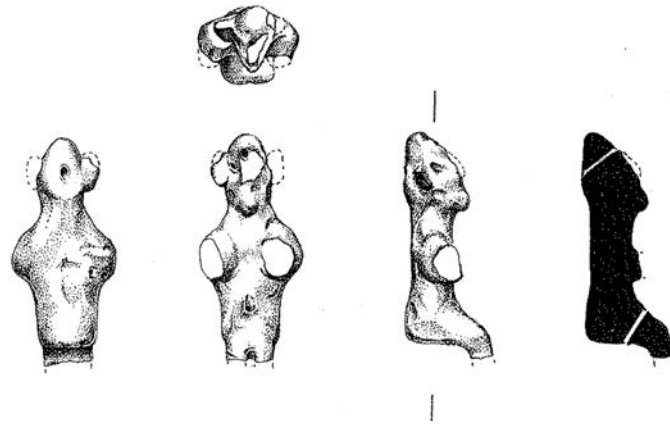


Figure 3.32. A seated male figurine from Gath  
(after Maeir 2008b: fig. 2).

It is interesting to note that the typical Canaanite naturalistic nude female plaque or ‘Astarte’ figurines (see, e.g., Pritchard 1943; Tadmor 1982; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 97–105; Moorey 2003: 35–46) hardly appear in Iron Age I Philistia (see Press 2007: table 4 for Ashkelon). These figurines only return to the Philistine sites during the Iron IIA–B, for example at Ashdod (fig. 3.33; Dothan and Freedman 1967: figs. 35:4, 43:4, 6; Dothan 1971: fig. 64; Dothan and Porath 1982: fig. 34:1; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005:213, fig. 3.96:4–5; see also Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 228, fig. 217), Ashkelon (fig. 3.34:1; Press 2007: 105–9, fig. 9, cat. nos. 62–7), Ekron (S. Gitin, personal communication) and Gath (a mould of a plaque figurine, depicting a nude female with hands raised upwards<sup>23</sup>; as well as other examples, A. Maeir, personal communication). One of the Ashdod examples depicts pregnancy (fig. 3.33:2), while one of the plaque figurines from Ashkelon depicts a female holding a child (Press 2007: 106, fig. 9:3, cat. no. 64). The symbolism communicated by these figurines is quite clearly associated with female fertility. Several plaque figurines from late 8<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and early 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE levels at Ekron (Strata IIA–IA) include a detailed and fine example of a plaque figurine of a pregnant woman (obj. no. 3235, Stratum IIA); another example, less detailed and more worn, depicts a woman with her hands under the breasts and is a more typical Astarte figurine (obj. no. 5667). An example of a plaque figurine depicting a ‘drummer girl’ was also found at Ekron (fig. 3.34:2); the figurine illustrates the details of the neck, headdress and a rounded object held by

<sup>23</sup> This mold could be redeposited from the Late Bronze Age, as it seems to be a mold for ‘Qedeshet’ figurines (e.g., Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 66–8; Cornelius 2004: 45–8), which, as opposed to the ‘Astarte’ figurines, are very rare in Iron Age contexts (see Press 2007: 235, and references therein).

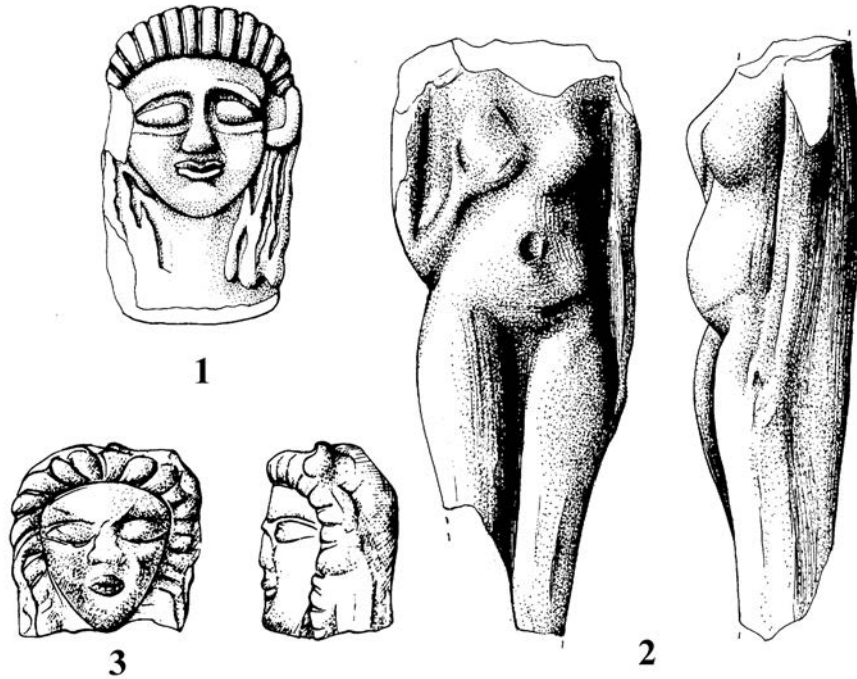


Figure 3.33. Plaque female figurines from Ashdod (courtesy of IAA).

both hands; the back side is not smoothed (fig. 3.34:2; obj. no. 1250). This can be classified as Paz's Type A figurine (Paz 2007: 13–38, figs. 2.1–2.3, with many parallels therein). These Canaanite-style plaque figurines appear alongside 'debased' or late 'Ashdoda' figurines at Ashdod (e.g., fig. 3.8:1).

It is at this time that Israelite or Phoenician female figurines also appear, especially at Ekron (e.g., fig. 3.35:2, Gitin 2003: 287, fig. 4 and parallels therein), and Ashkelon (fig. 3.35:1, Press 2007: 216–32, figs. 6–7, cat. cos. 31–61), however they are rather rare at Ashdod (fig. 3.35:3). These are defined as composite figurines, with mold-made heads of various styles; they are usually treated as a Levanto-Phoenician artifact (Pritchard 1943: 23–7, 56–7; Moorey 2003: 47–50; Press 2007: 216–32, for more references). Such hollow standing figurines from Ekron include an example of the molded head type, with a Phoenician style head dress (fig. 3.35:2; obj. no. 7309, Gitin 2003: 287, fig. 4). This figurine is especially important as it was found in Temple-Palace Complex 650. Another large, nearly complete Phoenician style 'drummer figurine' (obj. no. 7133) was found in Field INW; the head is of the molded type. This is similar to Paz's Type B, with a hollow conical body (Paz 2007: 39–43, fig. 2.4). As the publication of these figurines (by S. Gitin) is almost complete, they will not be discussed here in detail. Judean pillar figurines ('JPF', Kletter 1996; 2001), probably related to an 'Asherah

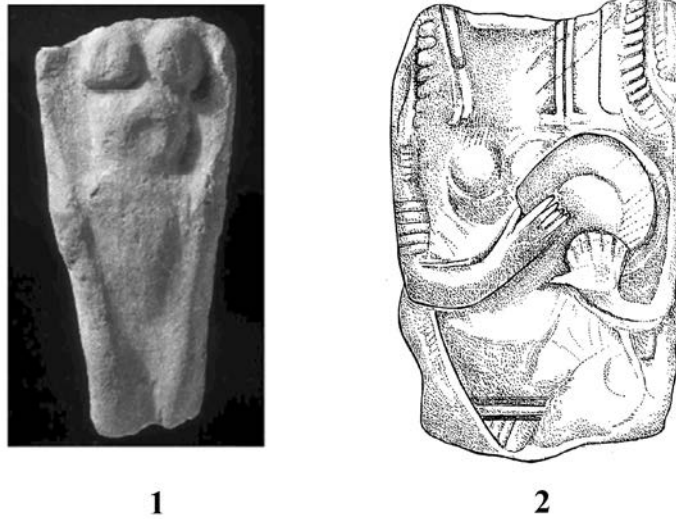


Figure 3.34. Plaque figurines from Ashkelon (MC39266, Press 2007: fig. 9:1; courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon) and Ekron (obj. no. 1250).

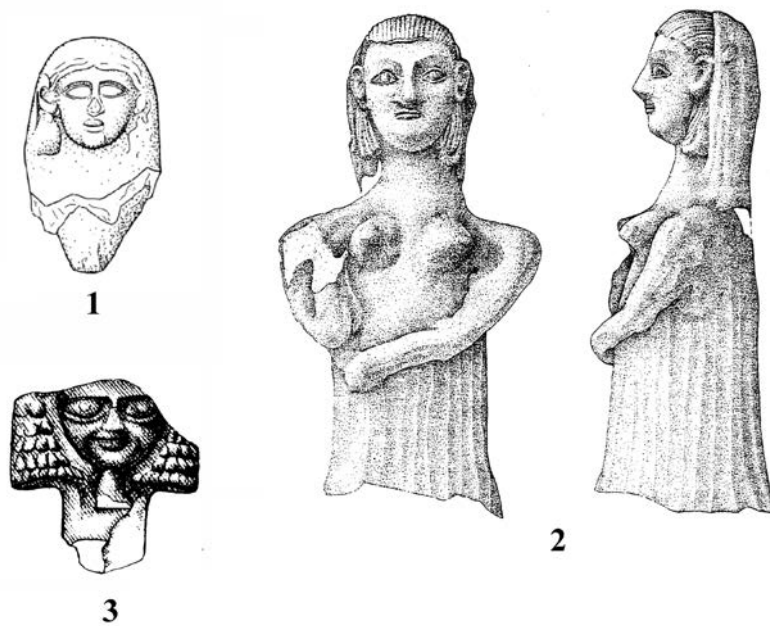


Figure 3.35. Standing hollow ('Phoenician') figurines from Ekron (obj. no. 7309), Ashkelon (MC 45164, Press 2007: fig. 7:4; courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon) and Ashdod.



cult' (see above, Hadley 2000, and more references therein), were also found in small numbers in eastern Philistia, such as at Ekron (obj. nos. 6159, 6559, S. Gitin, personal communication) and Gath (fig. 3.36, A. Maeir, personal communication), as well as at other sites in Philistia (Tel Batash, Beth Shemesh and Gezer – see Kletter 1996; 2001; see also Hadley 2000). Very few of these types of figurines were found at Iron Age II Ashdod (see, possibly Dothan 1971: fig. 65:4–5, yet, these may come from Persian levels). This may be attributed to the greater distance between Judah and Ashdod, especially in comparison with Ekron and Gath (Kletter 2001: 185–8).



Figure 3.36. Pillar figurine from Gath  
(courtesy of Aren Maeir).

At Ashkelon, the presence of a regional style of Iron Age II female figurines has been suggested (Press 2007: 216–32). These include hollow figurines with the hands on the breast and a cylindrical body, a variation of the Judean pillar figurines. This type is different than Phoenician figurines which are hollow, have a pierced head, a conical or bell-shaped body, are clothed and have drums. Some of the heads indicate that they were made in one mould, probably local to Ashkelon; at Ashdod there are no examples of this type, while at Ekron the composite figurines look more like the standard pillar figurines. It seems that these figurines may indicate the development of a regional style, as they differ from classical Judean figurines (Press 2007: 216–32). The typical Iron Age IIB–C horse or 'horse and rider' figurines (see below, fig. 3.67), which are very common in Judah, are also very rare in Philistine cities (other than Ashkelon). This may indicate that, indeed, the Philistine population had a regional style of cultic objects, possibly representing a variation in practices, at least in the Pentapolis city sites. Nevertheless, only with the more extensive publication of material from 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE levels at Ashkelon and Ekron will there be enough information for a reconstruction of the Philistine iconography at the end of the Iron Age II.

Several anthropomorphic and zoomorphic masks appear at Tel Qasile (Mazar 1980: 84–6, figs. 21–2) and Ashdod Stratum X–IX (fig. 3.37; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 199–200, fig. 3.87). Some of these may reflect a



Mesopotamian tradition (Mazar 1980: 86) and they seem to be linked to the Phoenician culture, appearing rarely in various Late Bronze Age contexts or later (Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 199–200). The mask from Ashdod (fig. 3.37) depicts a ridged headdress or crown with two applied pellets or knobs and a perforated eye, with traces of the applied nose and of a second eye also preserved. The reverse discloses the crude hand modeling of the object. Restored, the complete mask, probably anthropomorphic, would be about 15 cm in diameter. It seems that similar masks with perforated circular eyes are known from Tamassos in Cyprus (Karageorghis 1993: pl. LXVI:5). The eyes are modeled in a manner more typical of Classical Greece masks (e.g., Culican 1975: fig. 2), in contrast to other known ‘Canaanite’ masks with wider eyes (e.g., Hazor, Yadin et al. 1958: pl. CLXIII; 1960: pl. CLXXXIII). A fragment of a mask from Stratum V in Area A of Hazor (Yadin et al. 1958: pl. LX:10) may be similar as well; the ridged headdress, however, is unparalleled.

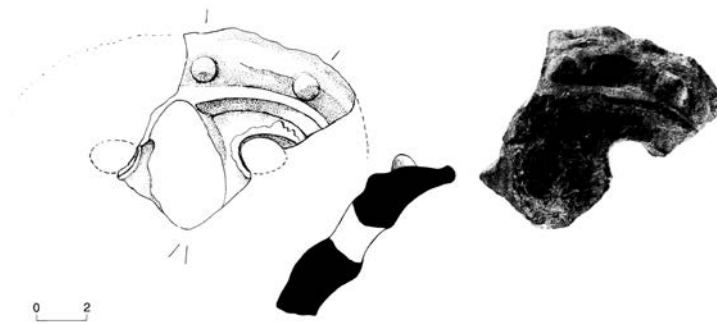


Figure 3.37. Mask fragment from Ashdod (Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: fig. 3.87; courtesy of IAA).

### 3.1.3.2. Ivory head

A complete ivory head from Ekron is interpreted as an inlay, since the backside is completely flat (fig. 3.38; Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: 15–16, fig. 10). The face is very well executed in three-dimensional high relief, and the exact proportions reflect great artistic skill. The details include eyes and perforations for pupils (possibly filled by another material) with delicate eye-brows, nose, and a mouth with detailed delicate lips. The neck is long and is cut in a rectangular shape, probably in order to facilitate the fitting. This head could have been used either as an inlay or possibly as the head of a composite object, such as a cosmetic spoon or flask (see Fischer 2007: pls. 95–6 for such a reconstruction). Similar female heads of ivory were found in the Late Bronze Age II Lachish Fosse Temple (Tufnell, Inge and Harding. 1940: 60, pl. 16:2,3,5, especially no. 2; Barnett 1982: pl. 20:a,b), Megiddo, Stratum VII

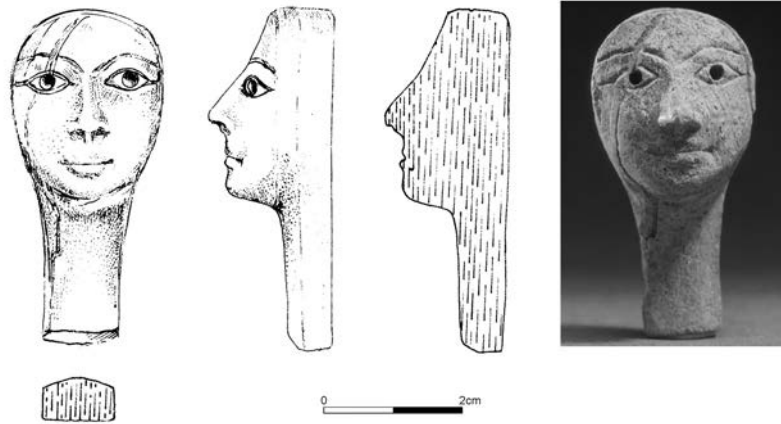


Figure 3.38. Ivory head from Ekron (Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 10).

(Loud 1939: 18, pl. 44:195–6), Ugarit (Gachet 1987: fig. 13) and the Kamid el-Loz Temple (Hachmann 1983: 87, nos. 6–7). The cultural background of these depictions is probably Syro-Canaanite, as they are more naturalistic than Egyptian depictions. The item from Ekron, found with a ‘pottery cache’ of Stratum IVA in Building 350 (Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: 4–5), shows either the continuation of this style during the Iron Age I or is a Late Bronze Age heirloom.

### 3.1.3.3. Depictions on seals and seal impressions

Canaanite- or Levantine-style human depictions also appear on seals and sealings. Four stamp seals were found at Ekron in clear Iron Age I contexts; three are conical or pyramidal. Two small limestone seals from Ekron depict two identical figures each (fig. 3.39; Ben-Shlomo 2006c: 143, figs. 14–15). One of the seals is pyramidal (fig. 3.39:2) and the other is smaller and conical (fig. 3.39:1). In fig. 3.39:2, the heads are rounded and made by drilling while the bodies – ‘stick-figured’ – are made through regular engraving; the figures are depicted with legs apart and hands to the sides of the bodies, in a very static position. In the other seal (fig. 3.39:1), the head and body were created by three vertical drilled holes on top of each other and the hands and legs by engraving. The figures are in a very dynamic position and are holding hands. The motif of two or three identical standing or dancing figures is known in other Iron Age sites (Tufnell 1953: pl. 44:68–9; Macalister 1912: pl. CCVI:5; Keel 1997: 656, no. 26; and Tell Kazel, Syria, Stratum 9–10, Badre et al. 1994: fig. 17:b).

Not many clay sealings were published thus far from the Iron Age southern Levant, possibly because they are usually not fired, not well preserved, and may not be easily recognized in excavations (Ben-Shlomo 2006c:

135–6).<sup>24</sup> A clay sealing from Ashdod (fig. 3.31:2; Dothan and Porath 1993: 83, fig. 38:2, pl. 48:1) has an impression, probably of a conical seal, showing two figures standing in front of a table or other object; this motifs recalls the pyramidal seal from Ashdod mentioned above (fig. 3.31:1) and may also be the depiction on a clay sealing from Ekron (fig. 3.49:2, see below). Other sealings from Ashdod cannot be securely dated to the Iron Age (Ben-Shlomo 2006c: 136). Thirty sealings and bullae from Ekron were recently published (Ben-Shlomo 2006c): fourteen examples come from clear Iron Age I contexts and five are from the Iron Age II contexts. Of the fourteen sealings with stamp impressions seven come from Iron Age I contexts, four from Iron Age II and three from unclear/unstratified contexts. Some of the sealings carry well-preserved stamp impression reflecting a typical early Iron Age glyptic style.

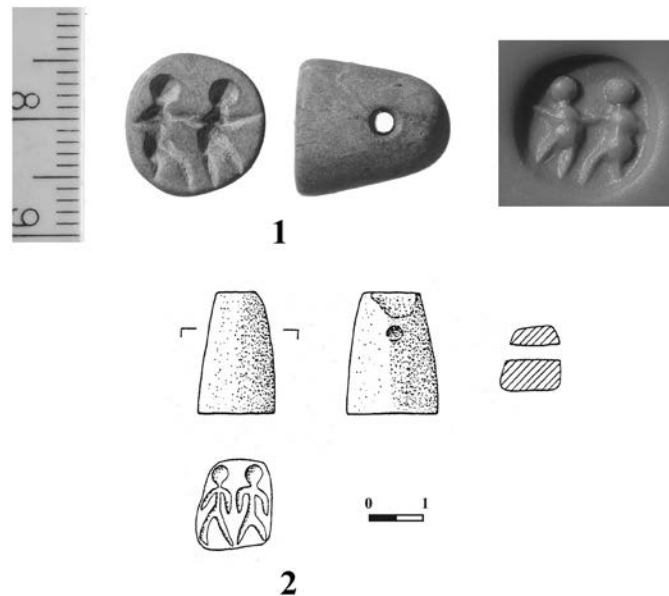


Figure 3.39. Stamp seals from Ekron (Ben-Shlomo2006c: figs. 14–15).

<sup>24</sup> The distinction between ‘bullae’ and other types of clay sealings is not always made in publications, and sometimes ‘bulla’ is used as a general term for sealings (e.g., Keel 1995a: 116–18). ‘Bullae’, or hanging clay sealings, are used to seal papyri (or other small parcels) that were tied by a string and usually have a small rounded button-shape (see Krzyszkowska 2005: 26). Clay sealings are a more general term describing a clay object, sealing a sack, vessel, box, parcel or other container. In this case a string or rope was used to close the object, but it is possible that the clay itself was used as a sealant. The latter can also be defined as a ‘direct sealing’ (Krzyszkowska 2005: 99–101), as opposed to a ‘clay nodule’ or ‘roundel’, which were hung independently on a string (Krzyszkowska 2005: 21; 155–61, 280–82).

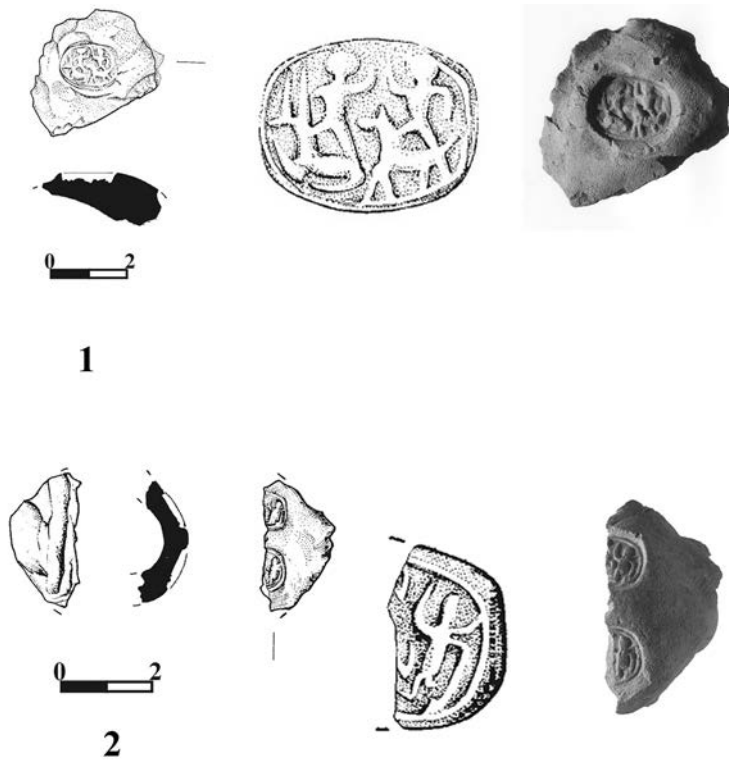


Figure 3.40. Sealings from Ekron (Ben-Shlomo 2006c: figs. 1,4).

An impression on a round sealing from Ekron Stratum VB (fig. 3.40:1; Ben-Shlomo 2006c: 138–9, fig. 1) depicts two figures mounted on animals. The right figure, holding an object (possibly a sword) in its right hand and another object in its left hand (possibly a shield), is standing on a quadruped with a thick long neck, probably a lion. The left figure is standing on a crouched horned animal, which may be a gazelle, ibex or a ram (the horns are peculiarly elongated), holding a sword in its right hand. The similarity to the scene of the two mounted gods Reshef and Ba'al (Cornelius 1994) immediately comes to mind. Both the style of the engraving and the composition of two animal-mounted gods are typical of the so-called Iron I 'mass-produced' or post-Ramesside seals (Keel 1995b; Münger 2003, 2005). The best parallels for this scene, probably depicting deities, come from Tell el-Far'ah (S) (Shuval 1990: 95–7; Münger 2003: fig. 1:8; Petrie 1930: pl. 31:287, on a conical seal, pl. XLIII:534), Ashdod (Keel 1997: Ashdod no. 54) and Tell Keisan (Keel 1990a: 246–7, no. 31). It is suggested that the horned animal on the left is a gazelle carrying the god Reshef while the right figure on the other animal, interpreted as a lion, is Ba'al-Seth (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 116, fig. 138a–b; see also Cornelius 1994: pl. 49: BM57–BM63). This could

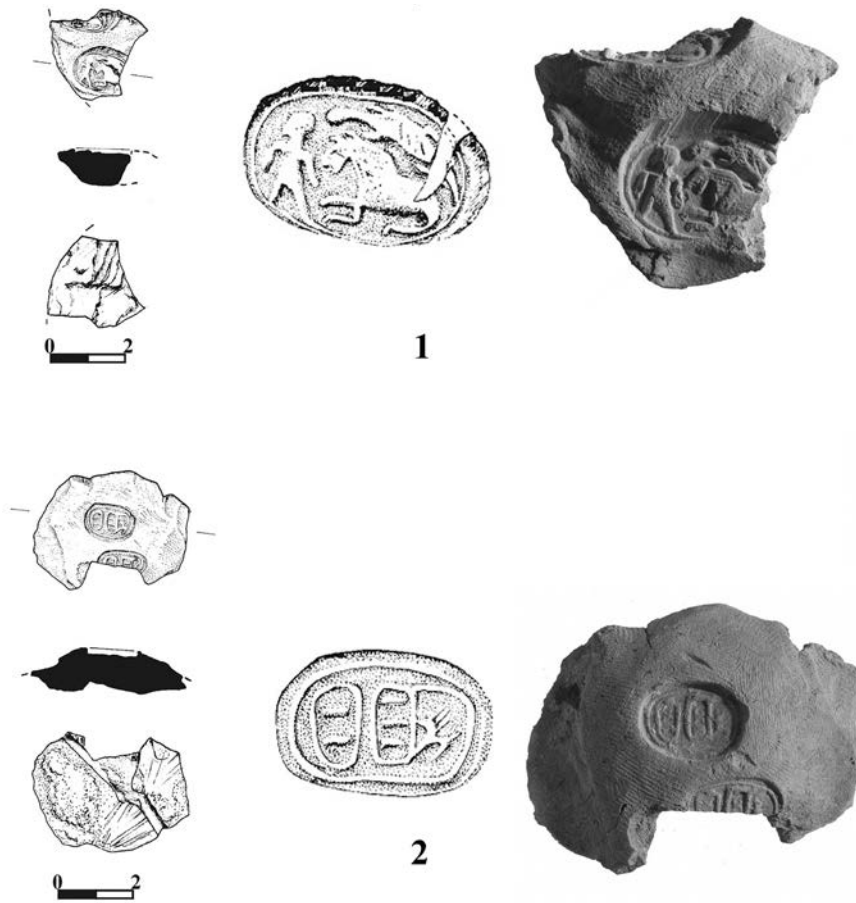


Figure 3.41. Sealings from Ekron (Ben-Shlomo 2006c: figs. 2–3).

indeed be an image of the ‘gods in triumph’, a rare depiction of deities found in a domestic context in Iron Age Philistia.<sup>25</sup>

Several additional Iron Age I sealings from Ekron with well-preserved stamp impressions illustrate Egyptian-derived or locally developed motifs. One of these (fig. 3.41:1, Ben-Shlomo 2006c: 139, fig. 2) shows a framed, standing figure with a large head and hands on its sides. On the bottom of the sealing is a crouching animal lying down, with another horizontal ani-

<sup>25</sup> Note that although two Canaanite gods may be depicted here, they were not necessarily viewed by the Philistines using this stamp seal as their deities; thus, the figurine from Gath described above (fig. 3.32) continues to be the only possible depiction of a male deity found in Philistia.

mal on top of it. The latter animal has small legs, a long tail and a neck, that resemble a lizard. A seal impression depicting a figure and an animal in front of it (as though plowing) was found in an Iron IIA level at Gath (A. Maeir, personal communication). Parallels for these motifs come from Tell el-Far'ah (S) (Petrie 1930: 14, pls. 43:509, 68), and possibly from Tel Rekesh (Keel 1994b: 42, fig. 8). A sealing found in the same area of Ekron (fig. 3.40:2, Ben-Shlomo 2006c: 140, fig. 4) has two identical, yet fragmentary, deep impressions depicting a schematic figure with its arms raised as in a greeting, dancing or worshipping gesture, and the edges of another figure. A sealing fragment with a worn, rectangular seal impression (Ben-Shlomo 2006c: 140, fig. 5) possibly depicts two or three standing figures. Two other sealings that probably belong to Late Bronze II scarabs carry very similar (though not identical) impressions (Ben-Shlomo 2006c: 140, figs. 6–7). Another round sealing (fig. 3.41:2, Ben-Shlomo 2006c: 139, fig. 3) has two identical impressions depicting two cartouche-like motifs, with a tiny animal figure (which may be horned) to their right (for a similar motif see below, fig. 3.49:2), however, the iconography is very schematic. There are no good parallels for this composition (see, though, Tell el-Far'ah, Starkey and Harding 1932: pl. 73:49; Keel 1997: Akko no. 164).

*A silver pendant/medallion from Ekron.* A stylistically rather unique find is a large, flat silver pendant or medallion found in a silver hoard of Stratum IB at Ekron (fig. 3.42 e.g., Gitin 1997: 93; Stern 2001: 124, fig. I.60; Ornan 2001a: 246–9, fig. 9.7; Dothan and Gitin 2008: 1956). The pendant shows a Meso-



Figure 3.42. Silver pendant from Ekron  
(after Dothan and Gitin 2008).



potamian-style goddess (probably Ištar), standing on a lion, with the moon, stars and crescents in the background and above; in front of the goddess is a standing figure dressed in a Mesopotamian style. This figure is probably attending to the goddess. While the iconography is stylistically Assyrian, the rather careless engraving technique indicates this may be locally, Assyrian-inspired workmanship of the 8<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE (Ornan 2001a; Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 12).

#### 3.1.4. Egyptian style

As will be seen below, quite a significant group of depictions from Philistia indicate Egyptian influence or the use of Egyptian motifs and compositions. This is especially true of depictions on ivories, seals and seal impressions.

##### 3.1.4.1. Depictions on ivory inlays

Several panel-type inlays from Ekron show parts of scenes of Egyptian nature or ‘Nilotic scenes’; most were found together in Field IIINE Stratum VI, and were probably part of one object, possibly a wooden box. The largest piece is a, 268x27x3 mm long panel (fig. 3.43; Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: 8–10, figs. 4, 8:4), part of a frame made of one piece of ivory, which is probably the upper frame of a box. The scene shows two heraldic young women swimming, facing each other, in free-space, and delimited within a linear frame. The left figure holds her hands out in front of her—one above the other; an outlined papyrus appears in the background of her legs, which are stretched back and with a schematic depiction of the toes. Three horizontal lines on the hair may depict straps binding the hair. The right figure probably holds a lotus flower in her right hand; the hands are held forwards, with two or three bracelets probably on the left wrist. Her hair flows backwards freely, with

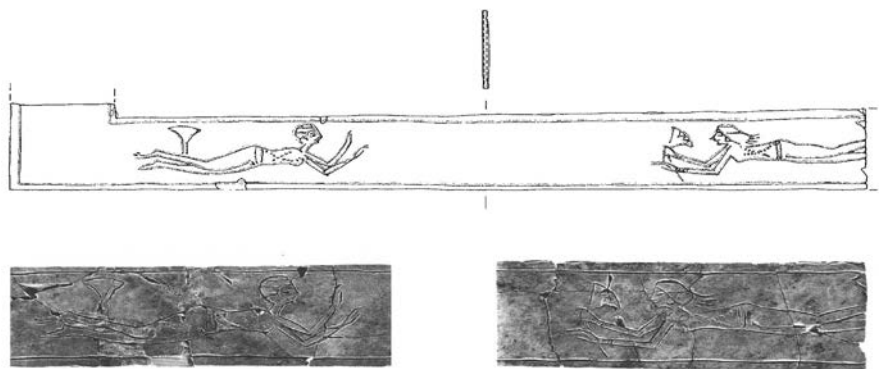


Figure 3.43. The swimmers panel from Ekron (after Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 4).

pointed edges, and her face has a more pointed nose and prominent chin than the left figure; a rounded earring is seen under the hair. An additional plant (probably a papyrus) is in the background. Both figures are nude in the lower body, but wearing a belt and are clothed on the upper body; this is some kind of girdle and blouse with a dotted 'X' design, probably depicting straps of the garment. The wide empty space in between the figures is peculiar, as it seems natural for other motifs to be located there.



Figure 3.44. A metal bowl from Tanis (after Keimer 1952: fig. 2).

An identical scene appears on a metal plate from Tanis, Egypt (fig. 3.44; Keimer 1952: 64, fig. 2; Smith 1958: 228–9, pl. 168:B), dated to Psusennes I (1039–991 BCE, the XXI Dynasty)<sup>26</sup>. The silver plate from Tanis shows a symmetric scene of two couples of girls swimming towards each other (placed on the central decorated gold sheet), with the similar 'X-shaped' girdle, which may be some kind of belt or quiver worn by the women in order

<sup>26</sup> A similar depiction also appears on a plate provenanced to Bubastis, which may belong to a treasure of the Goddess Bastet Temple, dated to the reign of Sethi II and Tewoseret (early 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE; see also Hayes 1959: 357–60, figs. 224–6).

to assist the collection of flowers and birds. This scene is denser than the Ekron scene and in the background fish, birds and plants are depicted. The iconography and motifs on these bowls show a continuation of tradition from the XVII–XIX Dynasties (Smith 1958: 228–9; Hayes 1959: 359–60) and are probably connected to marsh hunting and fishing within and near the banks of the Nile River; the Ekron scene, showing the same motifs is either more schematic, less detailed or incomplete.



Figure 3.45. A stone cosmetic bowl from Ekron (obj. no. 3392).

The theme of female swimmers, with papyrus and lotus flowers, appears in Egyptian art of the New Kingdom (Montet 1958: 125–30; Smith 1958: 228–9; Hayes 1959: 359–60). In some cases, it also appears on objects in the Levant related to cosmetics, such as spoon handles in the shape of a nude girl/woman in a horizontal swimming posture, holding a spoon in her hands (see discussion in Wallert 1967; Dothan 1979: 61; Fischer 2007: 277–339, pls. 94–128; see also fig. 3.45).<sup>27</sup> The spoon itself is often shaped like a duck or decorated by the lotus or other flowers (see Wallert 1967: pls. 12–14). Thus, the theme echoes a scene of a girl collecting ducks or flowers in the river. The depiction of such exact scenes on ivory panels or wall drawings is quite rare, though depictions of the Nile River are abundant, especially in relation to fishing scenes. These include the depiction of papyrus and lotus plants growing in the water. The appearance of the two swimming women in a ‘gathering outing’ on the Ekron ivory seems to reflect later Egyptian traditions of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasties, and thus seems to fit the context of Stratum VI (the early 11<sup>th</sup> century BCE).

A late Iron Age II find from Ekron that also depicts the same motif is a stone bowl, which is the upper part of a cosmetic spoon, in the shape of a nude female swimmer (fig. 3.45; obj. no. 3392, Basket ISW.3.135, Sand

<sup>27</sup> An example of an ivory cosmetic spoon was found in the old excavations at Gath (Fischer 2007: 333, pl. 120:L70); it may date to the Late Bronze Age. An example of a bone cosmetic spoon was found at Beit Zur, possibly also dating to the Late Bronze Age (Sellers and Albright 1931: 6).

Surface 3048). The object is a black stone (steatite?) bowl (6.8 cm in diameter), which is smoothed from the inside. On the lower portion of the outside, there is a highly skilled engraving of a palm tree in Phoenician style. Similar depictions of palms appear on ivories from Samaria (Crowfoot and Crowfoot 1938: pls. XVII–XXI, especially XXI:4–5; see also Barnet 1982: 43–55). The bowl is a part of a cosmetic spoon in the shape of a young female swimmer holding a bowl, attested to by the hand that can be seen on the upper right side of the object (fig. 3.45: right). It continues the tradition of cosmetic spoons in the shape of young female swimmers in action, but is stylistically different. Notably, none of the second-millennium BCE spoons studied by Fischer (Fischer 2007: 277–339, pls. 94–128) carry a palmette decoration on the bowl, and clearly this is a late development, replacing the papyrus and lotus plants with palms. Somewhat similar ‘hand bowls’ from ivory and stone come from Tell Afis and Nimrud, though these show different styles and motifs (Herrmann 2005: 17, pls. XIII–XV; see also Beck 2000: 176). This is an example of an Egyptian motif and object appearing in ‘Phoenician’ style during the late Iron Age II in Philistia (as the style of the palmettes indicate; see also Barag 1985 for this decoration style on Phoenician-style stone bowls).

A fragment of an ivory inlay from Ashkelon shows a woman standing on a fishing boat with large papyrus plants in the background. It seems to come from a Late Bronze Age II context (Stager 1991; 2004), yet, this inlay is stylistically very similar to the Ekron inlays, including the depiction of the figure and its clothing.

A ‘Nilotic’ motif appears on another panel fragment from Ekron (fig. 3.47:1; Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: 10, figs. 6:1, 8:2), depicting a striding (probably male) figure, dressed with an Egyptian-style garment/skirt reaching his knees and a headdress or rounded cap. The right hand is completely folded to the chest and holds an object, either a papyrus reed or a tool, such as a sickle or staff. The left arm is folded, holding forward a similar object. Another fragmentary papyrus reed can be seen on a fragment of a rectangular inlay (fig. 3.47:2). Similar figures appear on an ivory inlay from Tell ‘Ajjul (Petrie 1932: pl. 24:1,3) and especially on a large inlay from Tell el-Far‘ah (S), with one of the figures holding a papyrus-like staff (fig. 3.46; Petrie 1930: pl. 45, see below). A smaller panel fragment shows a bush or group of at least two out-curving papyrus plant stems (fig. 3.47:4; Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: figs. 6:4, 8:3); the plants are depicted as growing in a watery area (as they are on the lower part of the register). In addition, the lower part of an animal’s foot, probably a bull (possibly depicted as galloping over the marsh), can be seen on it.<sup>28</sup> This is the only inlay from Ekron, which is carved in the bas-relief method. Similar depictions of the papyrus bush can be found in various Egyptian ivories, stone and metal (see Fischer 2007: pl. 46).

<sup>28</sup> I wish to thank Angela Busch of Mainz University for identifying this detail.

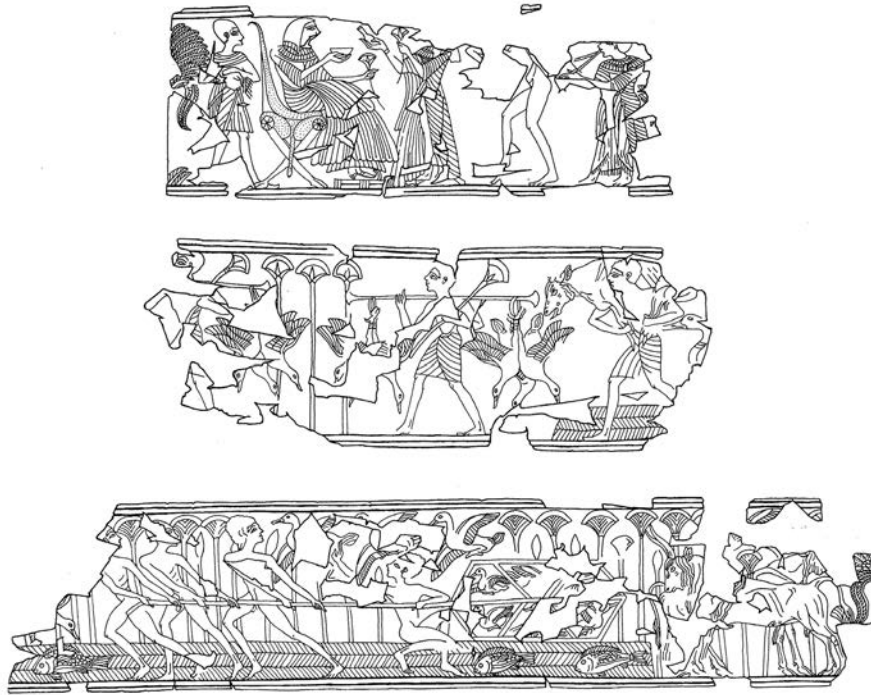


Figure 3.46. Ivory inlays of a box from Tell el-Far'ah (S)  
(after Barnett 1982: fig. 10).

A series of large ivory inlays (probably from the same box) comes from Tell el-Far'ah (S) (fig. 3.46; Petrie 1930: 19, pl. LV; Ussishkin 1969: 6; Barnett 1982: 21–2, fig. 10). It was found in Chamber YC of the 19<sup>th</sup>-Dynasty residency (Petrie 1930: pl. LIV) and was part of a burnt wooden (game?) box. The date of this find would be either the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE (somewhat earlier than the Ekron ivories discussed above). As it shows strong similarities to the Ekron ivories it will be presented and described here in detail, although there is a chance it predates the Philistine period. In any case this would be a good example of Canaanite and Egyptian iconography of the late second millennium BCE in southern Israel, produced on ivory.

The panels illustrate a 'Nilotic scene' with a distinct aquatic background. Part of the scene that is seen on one of the panels (fig. 3.46: lower) shows four nude men/youths pulling a (box-shaped) cage or trap with birds (possibly ducks). Several similar birds fly over the figures. In the background a row of papyrus create a Nilotic marsh impression. The lower part of the panel is decorated with three dotted lines in three registers, representing the river's water. In the river, in which the figures are standing, fish are also depicted



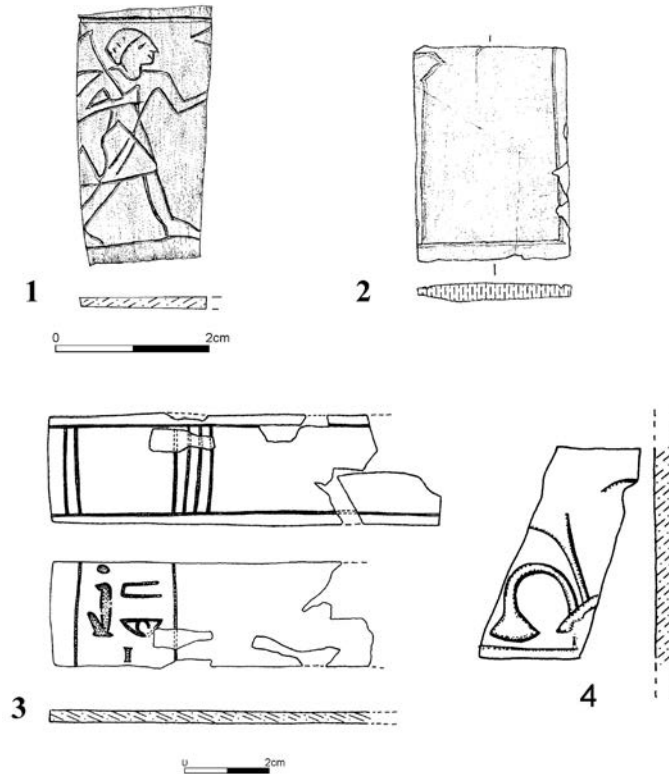


Figure 3.47. Ivories with Egyptian motifs from Ekron  
(after Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 6).

as they swim. On the right side, a bull or a water buffalo stands, while a similar animal figure facing the opposite direction is standing behind it. The general composition and some of the motifs are very similar to metal bowls from Egypt (as fig. 3.44), however, this is a rather masculine scene, unlike the feminine ones usually depicted on the bowls. This is possibly a description of slaves (due to the nudity of the figures) or of youths hunting birds on the Nile River. On another inlay from the same box (fig. 3.46: middle), the hunting figures appear with their catch, and it seems that this scene is chronologically subsequent to the previous one. A procession of three male figures, this time clothed with Egyptian-style skirts, is shown walking from the area of the river to dry land (depicted by two horizontal parallel lines). The right, rear figure carries a bull or water buffalo on its shoulder. The two figures in front carry a staff in their right hand and on their shoulder, with two groups of three birds hanging on each; the birds are tied with their feet upwards (though it is unclear whether they are alive or not). The figures carry a papyrus-like staff with rounded ends (possibly a papyrus branch), resembling the



staff seen on the inlay from Ekron (fig. 3.47:1). Also similar to the figures from Ekron, the figures here carry a lotus in their left hand. It is possible that carrying the lotus in these occasions had a certain symbolic meaning. Generally, the lotus is associated with rebirth and the rising sun in Egyptian mythology; it is a dominant motif in Egyptian iconography throughout the ages (e.g., Ossian 2008); it is also a typical attribute in the depiction of kings in Canaan (see Beck 2000: 181; Schmitt 2001: 95–9, appearing also at late Iron Age Kuntillet 'Ajrud, Beck 1982: fig. 21). It should be noted that such a depiction, with figures striding with a staff and lotus in their hands, appears later on furniture implements from Zincirli (Winter 1981: 120, pl. XVII:a, Berlin Museum no. S3879).

Several other fragments from the same box depict another Egyptian-style scene (fig. 3.46: upper), but of a different nature. The scene contains five different figures. In the center, a figure, probably a king or a high official, sits on a chair/throne and holds a small bowl in his right hand and a lotus plant in his left. Opposite him there is a female figure (the head is missing, but it may be that this was his queen/wife), which hands the seated figure a vessel (it seems to be a juglet from which she pours into his cup); in her other hand she holds a lotus. Behind the seated figure stands another figure, probably a servant, with its hands crossed on its belly. Behind the female figure there are two additional figures: the front one is a nude dancer (possibly female) and the rear one is a flute player. All the clothed figures are dressed in typical Egyptian apparel. On the far ends of the scenes, stylistic palm trees are depicted, as if framing the scene within a courtyard or a garden. This scene seems to represent a feast, probably related to the seated figure of the king or governor. The connection to the other scenes on the box is not self-evident, but, it is possible that what is being shown is the feast that followed the successful hunting expedition (quite similar to the feast depiction on the Megiddo ivory, Loud 1939: pl. 2,4. Note particularly the similarity of the royal couple, with the seated man having a bowl in its right and a lotus in its left hand; see Leibowitz 1980). The style of the inlays from Tell el-Far'ah (S) does not seem to predate their context, i.e. the Late Bronze Age II, and suggests Canaanite workmanship with Egyptian motifs (this is agreed upon by several scholars: Petrie 1930: 19; Leibowitz 1980, 1987; Lilyquist 1998: 28; Beck 2000: 166); the composition of the scene of the feast and successful hunting also seems Canaanite. As opposed to most other representation discussed here, this is a highly narrative composition of scenes, probably representing the Canaanite or Levantine ivory craftsmanship at its peak.

Also to be noted is an ivory inlay from Ekron with hieroglyph signs and blue pigment (fig. 3.47:3; Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: 12–5, figs. 6:3, 8:1), which, according to D. Ben-Tor (personal communication), reads 'Horus of the two horizons in feast'. The signs were carved on the back side of this inlay (possibly in secondary use), which is otherwise only decorated linearly.



Figure 3.48. Detail of ivory statue from Ekron (Stern 2001: fig. I.97).

A short note should be added regarding a group of ivories found in the Temple-Palace Complex 650 at Ekron. The two auxiliary rooms at the western end of the sanctuary, opposite the entrance, contained hundreds of complete ceramic vessels, gold, silver and bronze objects, and a large number of ivory objects and fragments (Gitin 1998; Gitin, Dothan and Brandl forthcoming). Other ivory objects were found in the sanctuary's side rooms. This is possibly the largest concentration of ivories in the Iron Age southern Levant. The study of this assemblage is still in progress; it includes four larger and more complete items, which are currently being prepared for publication (S. Gitin, T. Dothan and B. Brandl, forthcoming). Of these, a unique large ivory figure, 38 cm high, carved from an elephant tusk, has its backside inscribed with an inscription containing two names of Merneptah, dating to the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE; only the upper part of this inscription was preserved. On the lower left side of the figure there is a very well executed high relief depiction of a standing female figure (fig. 3.48; Gitin 1998; Stern 2001: fig. I.97). The head is adorned with an 'atef crown on top of a sun disk, which is depicted between horns; a serpent rises from the forehead; the left arm is placed on the chest and is possibly holding a lotus flower or scepter; necklaces are depicted on the neck, while the garment folds are depicted by many engraved lines. This could be a depiction of the goddess Hathor or a royal female figure. This impressive ivory figure has no known parallels either from the Levant

or from Egypt. Other large ivories include a conical object, and a possible lotus-shaped scepter head, inscribed with two crowned cartouches. A large ivory head, over 17 cm high, was found in the southwestern corner of the complex. This object is the largest of its kind found in Israel, and it has no exact parallels to date. Also found in the complex is a flask in the form of a female, carved from an elephant tusk (see Fischer 2007: 185–276, pl. 76: F51, on this item and similar objects from the Levant). At least two of these large ivory objects were made during the 13<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE, at least 600 years prior to the period of the context in which they were found. It is possible or even probable that some or all of these objects were made in Egypt, or somewhere outside Philistia. Only further study of the stylistic and contextual aspects, as well as defining the source of these objects can shed more light on this problem.

#### 3.1.4.2. *Seals, seal impressions and faience objects*

Several seals and sealings carry Egyptian or ‘Egyptianizing/Egyptianized’ motifs. A glazed pendant from Stratum XII at Ashdod (fig. 3.49:6; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 130, fig. 3.41:1) depicts a standing figure alongside seated ones, possibly in scene of royal divine attendance showing various Egyptian elements. One of the figures is seated on a wide square seat (possibly a throne) and holds a curved staff (that may have a decorated handle) in his right arm; the left arm rests on his lap. The depiction of the large head, perhaps with a headdress, is poorly preserved; possible details could be an eye and two earrings. The second figure stands to the left of the seated figure, facing it. His arms are upraised, offering a vessel to the seated figure. The head of this figure is seemingly crowned in an Egyptian (serpent?) crown. This object may depict a possibly Egyptian royal-divine attendance scene. A comparable depiction is seen on the ‘Mekhal stele’ from Bet Shean, where the local architect attends on the ‘Egyptianized’ deity of Bet Shean (Rowe 1930: 14–15, pl. 33; Thompson 1970; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 82).

A faience, ring-shaped stamp seal (fig. 3.49:3; Ben-Shlomo 2006c: 143–4, fig. 16) has an engraved base, with a handle on the upper part that is decorated by groups of incisions. The base depicts a standing figure (with the upper part missing) with its hands reaching out to the front, with a snake motif (*uraeus*) facing it from below. The hand of the figure is either holding an elongated object or is winged. This composition is not chronologically indicative. Iron Age parallels for the base come from Tell Keisan (Keel 1990a: 234, nos. 53–5) and Megiddo, Stratum V (Lamon and Shipton 1939: pl. 71:77). A stone scarab from Ashdod also depicts a similar scene of a king holding a scepter standing before an *uraeus* deity (Brandl 1993: 137, no. 11 – see also Gezer: Macalister 1912: pls. 206:53, 207:34). The scene possibly represents the worship of a deity by the king. These seals use various compositions of Egyptian motifs, and are possibly related to the so-called ‘mass produced’ seals (Münger 2003: 67).

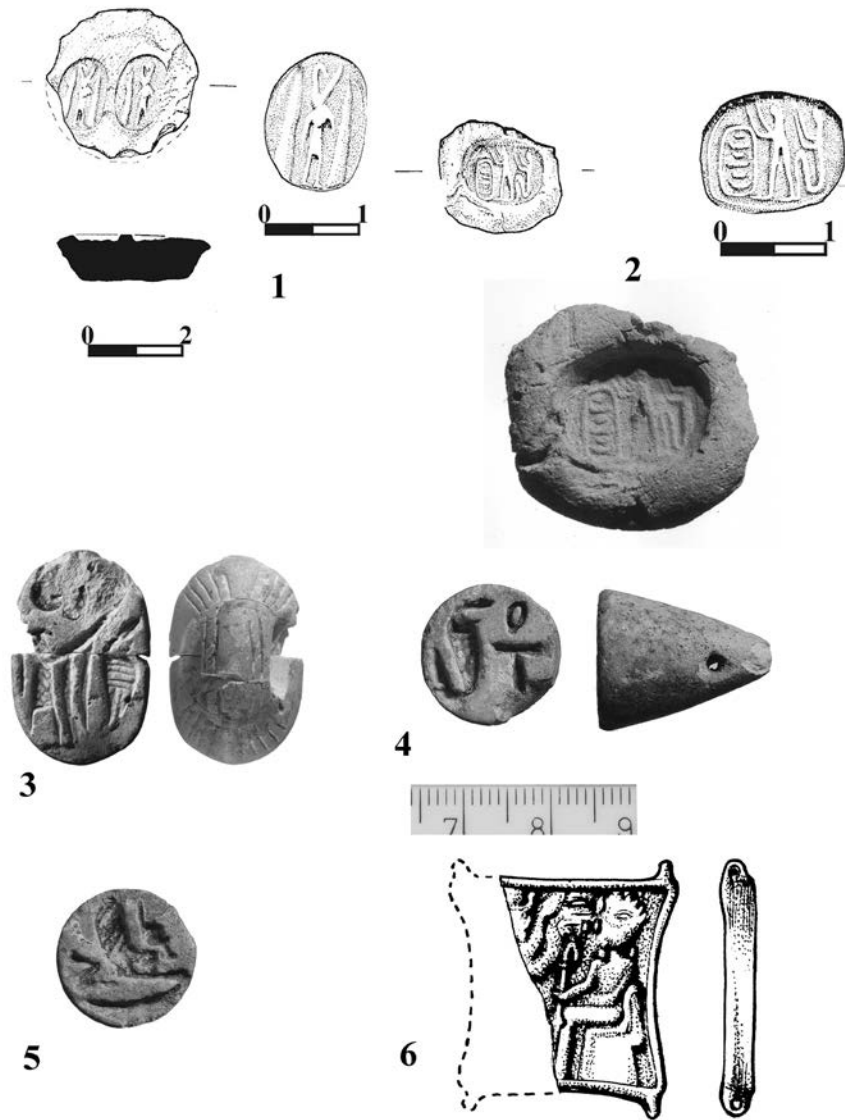


Figure 3.49. Seals, sealings and a pendant with Egyptian motifs from Ekron and Ashdod.

About 52 scarabs were found at Ekron, with around 30–40 dating to the Iron Age (with the rest stylistically dated earlier or worn out); these items, most of which also represent Egyptian styles or motifs (many may have been produced outside Philistia) will be published elsewhere (Brandl forthcoming) and will not be discussed here further.

Two small conical seals made of greenish faience were found in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE destruction level at Ekron (fig. 3.49:4–5). These seals show various imitations of Egyptian motifs, in a style that is usually defined as ‘Phoenician’ and dates to the Iron Age IIA–B (Keel 1995b: 58; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 220–23, nos. 210–13). One of these (fig. 3.49:4) depicts a schematic *ankh* sign (with a detached loop) and a large *uraeus* snake facing it; the engraving is relatively deep. The composition uses schematically depicted Egyptian motifs; while both the *ankh* and the *uraeus* symbols are very common on scarabs and seals, pieces solely including these two motifs are rare (see Jericho, Keel 1995a: fig. 236; possibly Gezer: Macalister 1912: pl. 208:25; also Keel 1997: Tell Abu Hawam no. 5). The second seal (fig. 3.49:5) depicts a winged and bearded seated sphinx wearing the crown of Upper Egypt, with an upraised tail. Either the sphinx sits on some sort of platform, or there is another arched(?) sign below it (possibly an *nb* sign; see similar depictions, Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 269, fig. 268b; also somewhat similar, Gezer: Macalister 1912: pl. 208:14; see also Keel 1997: Akko no. 217). This composition includes Egyptian motifs, possibly in a ‘Phoenician’ style.

A rounded object from Stratum VIIA at Ekron (fig. 3.49:1; Ben-Shlomo 2006c: 141, fig. 8) is probably a stopper or a lid of a small vessel. The wider side has two identical impressions depicting a standing figure flanked by two elongated objects, possibly obelisks. This may be derived from a scene of a king holding hands with two gods (see Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 92, fig. 116c, with a similar head gear; also Tufnell 1958: pl. 36:240; Macalister 1912: fig. 437:1).

A ‘proper bulla’ from Stratum IC Ekron dating to the Iron Age IIB (fig. 3.49:2; Ben-Shlomo 2006c: 142, fig. 12), carries an impression depicting an oval object with signs on the left, a cartouche or stele with ‘pseudo-hieroglyphs’, and two figures on the right, with hands raised in a gesture of worship. A good parallel was published from a collection (Keel-Leu 1991: 82, no. 99). This motif appears on rectangular plaques showing one official in front of a cartouche with the name of Ramses II (Spieser 2000: 321, nos. 126–36); it reappears on Judean bone seals and scarabs of the early Iron Age II (Keel and Uehlinger 2001: 305, figs. 265a–c). An impression of two figures facing a standing object from Ashdod, Stratum XII should also be mentioned (see above, fig. 3.31:2). These seals may depict figures praying to a cartouche (see Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 266–8, nos. 265a–c), usually dating to the late Iron Age II, although it may have appeared earlier as well, as suggested by possible examples from Ekron and Ashdod (figs. 3.31:2, 3.41:2). Another object from an Iron Age IIA context at Ashdod is a jar handle stamped by a square impression (probably a conical seal) showing a walking (armed?) figure (Dothan and Friedman 1967: 132, fig. 36:19, pl. 24:2). An additional seal impression on a bulla/sealing comes from Ashdod, Area M, Stratum VII (Dothan and Porath 1982: 40, fig. 27:7, pl. 24:11) and depicts a figure and a legible cartouche (possibly reading *men-kheper-re*). Although



the context is not clear, it is quite possible that this item originated from an Iron Age I level.

A group of Egyptian items from the late 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE Ashkelon 'winery' should also be mentioned; these include a bronze statuette of the god Osiris, a faience statuette of the god Bes and a cache of seven bronze bottles (*situlae*), which are decorated in a relief of the procession of gods, including a prominent depiction of the god *Min* or *Amen-Re* with an erect phallus (Stager, Schloen and Master 2008: 281, figs. 15.56–15.57). Also found in the same context is a bronze votive offering table engraved with a loaf of bread flanked by libation flasks; two baboons sit in the corners, with a falcon, jackal and frog depicted as well. Other objects with Egyptian iconographic depictions are beads and pendants in the shape of Egyptian hieroglyphs or other symbols. Most common are the 'eye of Horus', *wedjat* (Herrmann 1994: 611–773), and the lotus seed (see, e.g., Golani and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 250, fig. 4.1:7; Golani 2006: 195–6, fig. 5.2:12); pendants depicting Egyptian deities, such as Bastet (Herrmann 1994: 146–200) or others also occasionally appear (e.g. Ashdod, Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: fig. 3.98:7; Ekron, Golani 2006: fig. 5.2:13). These items are usually made of stone or faience and are found in Ashdod, Ekron and Ashkelon, indicating a continued influence of Egyptian traditions (both in style and technique) on Iron Age jewelry in Philistia. Nevertheless, these could also have been imported from Egypt, and, thus, their importance within the Philistine iconographic assemblage may be secondary.

It seems that most motifs appearing on the seals and sealings from Philistia illustrate Canaanite and Egyptian influence and can be seen as part of the iconographic syntax and symbolism of the early Iron Age in the southern Levant. It is possible that two or three of the seals from Ashdod may be an exception and reflect certain Cypriot affinities. Generally, there seems to be a rise in the occurrence of stamp seals in the southern Levant during the early Iron Age (Shuval 1990: 116), while a new iconographic world of various combinations of animal and human motifs appears on the seals (Shuval 1990: 116; Keel 1995b: 126–8; Münger 2003). This new style integrates Egyptian motifs already used in the Late Bronze Age II, but depicts them in a different composition and a more schematic manner (Shuval 1990: 116–18).

#### *Note 1. Anthropoid clay coffins*

T. Dothan has included the anthropoid coffin burials within the framework of Philistine burial customs (Dothan 1982: 252–88), and henceforth the iconography represented by the coffin lids into the Philistine iconography. While it is clear now that the main assemblages of anthropoid burials in the southern Levant, e.g. Beth Shean (Oren 1973) and Deir el-Balah (Dothan 1979), date to the Late Bronze Age (14<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE), Dothan discusses three examples from Tell el-Far'ah (S) (Dothan 1982: 260–68) and two examples from Lachish (Dothan 1982: 276–9), which apparently date to



the Iron Age I. Especially important are the two examples from cemetery 500 at Tell el-Far'ah, which is more securely dated to the Iron Age I (the other examples are from contexts mixed with Late Bronze Age remains). Further, Dothan compares these burials and the depictions on the coffins to a group of burials in the Nile delta sites (Dothan 1982: 280–88), and suggests two groups of coffins: an earlier and later group. The late group is attributed to the Philistines and is suggested to represent their strong relations with the Egyptians (Dothan 1982: 288). The head gear appearing on some of the coffins is especially emphasized and is comparable to the Egyptian depictions of the Philistines on the Medinet Habu reliefs (see fig. 3.50).

Dothan's interpretation of the anthropoid coffins has been criticized by other scholars on several occasions (e.g., Oren 1973: 139–50; Mazar 1992: 279–80). It is clear that this practice represents Egyptian burial customs, probably used for Egyptian officials posted in the southern Levant. The occurrence of a few Iron Age I examples in Philistia may indicate a secondary usage of Late Bronze Age coffins, or may be evidence of a few Egyptians being buried at the same site during the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Thus, these coffins and the representations on them should not be included in the framework of the Iron Age material culture of Philistia (and, thus, will not be presented and discussed here). While there may be similarities between the depictions on some coffin lids and depictions associated with the Philistines and other Sea Peoples, it still seems early to draw any conclusions regarding this usage of Egyptian iconographic conventions. While a large group of coffins from Deir el-Balah has been recently published (Dothan 2007), a more detailed iconographic analysis of the depictions on the coffin lids from this and other assemblages is still lacking.

*Note 2. Philistine iconography as represented by other sources*

A certain 'mirror image' of Philistine iconography describes the way in which Philistines and Philistine iconography are portrayed by non-Philistines. There are several portrayals of Philistine people and Philistine gods in Egyptian and Assyrian wall reliefs. The sea peoples, including the Philistines, are portrayed in the Medinet Habu reliefs in Egypt (fig. 3.50), dated to the 8<sup>th</sup> year of Ramesses III. T. Dothan notes various items depicted in the Medinet Habu reliefs as being of Aegean origin according to similarities with depictions of warriors from Greece, Crete and Cyprus (Dothan 1982: 5–13). These include the feathered headdress, the rounded shield, body corselet, sword types, and ships with duck-shaped bows (see also Wachsmann 1998: 177–94, 300). The depiction of the different peoples with different ships and headdresses may also imply that they had some ethnic identity. Special attention was given to feathered headdresses of the Sea Peoples (Philistines, *Tjekker* and *Denyen*), with similar depictions appearing on a Middle Minoan IIIB disk from Phaistos, Crete (see also Macalister 1914: 83–7), a seal from Enkomi and possibly anthropoid coffin lids from Israel. The *Sherden* are depicted with horned

helmets. Note also the spiking hair on the figures from the Ashkelon krater (fig. 3.12), which may be a similar depiction as well.



Figure 3.50. Depictions of Philistines from Medinet Habu  
(after Mazar 1992: fig. 8.3).

Several Assyrian depictions may also be relevant. A group of statues of deities is seen on a depiction of a procession of god statues. The statues were looted from cities captured by Tiglath-pileser III, and displayed in his central palace at Nimrud (fig. 3.51; Barnett and Falkner 1962: pl. 92; see Uehlinger 1997: 124–8, fig. 45). There is a possibility that these gods come from Gaza, and are related to the rebellion of king Hanun (Uehlinger 2002: 115; Ornan 2005: 94–5, figs. 117–20, and references therein). The female seated goddess seen in the procession on the far right (fig. 3.51: right), seems to be depicted holding a conical cup (possibly a kylix – Uehlinger 1997: 124; 2002, though, the item held is interpreted as flower; Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 29); if so, this would resemble Aegean depictions of the seated goddesses (see Yasur-Landau 2001, 2008, and references therein). The other goddess holds a ring and may not be clearly identified (as along with another small-sized standing god/goddess), while the male god depicted on the left resembles the Levantine weather god (e.g., Uehlinger 1997: 127; Ornan 2005: 77). If this depiction indeed portrays a realistic view of the gods in the Philistine temple of Gaza during the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE, it illustrates a cult combining Aegean and Canaanite gods. This ‘pantheon’ includes at least two goddesses and at least one male Levantine god; a similar picture may arise from other evidence, such as the Ekron inscription (e.g., Demsky 1997). Moreover, this depiction indicates that (probably composite) statues depicting Philistine gods did

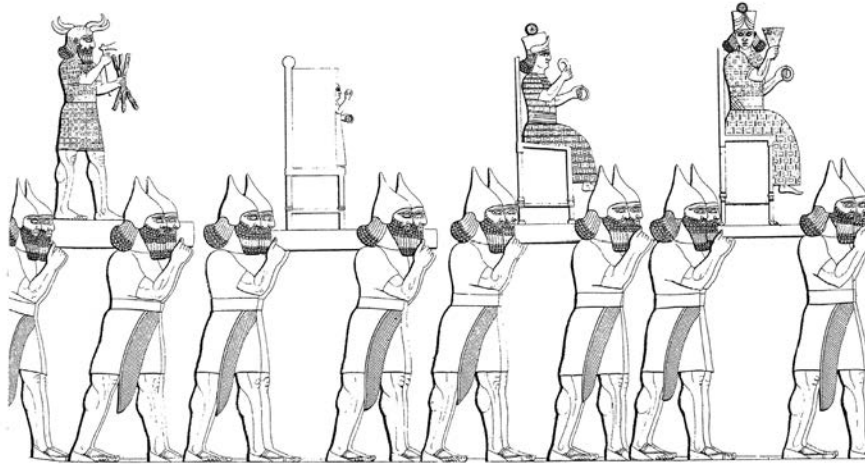


Figure 3.51. A procession with statues looted from Gaza, from Tiglath-pileser III southwest palace of Nimrud (after Barnet and Falkner 1962: pl. 92).

exist in the official temples of the major cities. The depiction in Sennacherib's southwest palace at Nineveh (Uehlinger 1997: 124–8, fig. 46; Ornan 2005: figs. 118–119, references therein) relates to the capture of Ashkelon, but is more fragmentary, and the images of the gods are very schematic or not preserved.

### 3.1.5. Summary: human depictions

The archaeological evidence from Philistia illustrates a rather rich and diversified collection of human representations. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the objects that depict these representations are rather few in number (compared to, for example animal representations, see table 2 below). Most representations are mostly limited to a few types of objects – female terracottas, cult stands and glyptics; representations in other forms, such as figurative pottery vessels or pottery decoration, are very rare. The stylistic classification of the depictions can be quite clear in certain cases, for example, the Aegean-style female figurines, the Iron Age II Canaanite figurines and the Egyptian-style depictions on ivory inlays and seals. In other cases, a rather rich assemblage of representations seems to indicate a hybrid style representing a mixture of Aegean, Canaanite, Philistine and sometimes Egyptian traditions. A good example for this is the Iron Age IIA terracottas from Ashdod and the Yavneh cultic stands. The further interpretation of these representations in relation to cultural developments, symbolism, ideology cult and religion will be discussed in sections 4.2–4.4.

### 3.2. *Animal depictions*

Apparently, animal depictions outnumber human depiction in Philistine iconography (see below, table 2, with a ca. 2:1 ratio). They are also more diversified, as they depict a variety of species. Nevertheless, the vast majority of examples probably only depict a few animals – the bull, the horse or donkey, the lion, the bird and the ibex, ram or goat. Other clearly identified animals are rare. While in certain classes of animal depictions, the ‘style’ category is well defined, in many other cases, the depictions are rather universal, and a cultural style is more difficult to determine. In these cases a local Canaanite style was assumed unless any evidence indicated otherwise (such as specific compositions, decoration style etc.).

#### 3.2.1. *The bull*

It seems that the most dominant animal depicted in the Philistine material culture is the bull; yet, this applies mostly to the Canaanite and hybrid styles. Bovines appear in various ceramic forms (e.g. figurines, libation vessels and within large terracotta compositions), and more scarcely on other materials, such as ivory carvings and glyptics; they are, however, lacking from painted pottery decoration.

##### 3.2.1.1. *Aegean style*

*Decorated bovine figurines.* One of the clear Aegean-style types of terracotta figurines is the decorated bovine figurine, which thus far appears only in the earliest Iron Age I levels at Ekron (figs. 3.52–3.53; Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: 58–60, figs. 16–18), including twelve examples (seven from well-stratified Iron Age I contexts). Four examples are made of fine calcareous clay and are more similar to the Mycenaean prototypes (figs. 3.52:1–2, 3.53:1), while the others are considered to be a more derivative type. The most complete example was found on the east slope of the acropolis in Stratum VIIA (fig. 3.52:1; Ben-Shlomo 2006b: 190, fig. 5.1:1; Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: figs. 16:1, 17), and is the front part of a decorated bovine figurine. The dark brown decoration consists of stripes along the snout and dewlap, two dots as eyes, stripes on the horns and a ladder shaped pattern on the sides of the neck and legs. Aegean parallels can be found at the syringes at Tiryns (Weber-Hiden 1990: pls. 41:71, 47:149), Phylakopi (French 1985: pl. 46.c.148), and a Cypriote parallel comes from Enkomi (Dikaios 1969–1971: pl. 137:23). Another example (fig. 3.52:2; Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: fig. 16:2) has a net pattern on the back and ladders on the sides of the legs. This pattern is common on Mycenaean bovine figurine, especially for Late Helladic IIIB–C examples (French 1971: 156–8; also Tiryns, Weber-Hiden 1990: pl. 42.86; Kilian 1981b: fig. 12). Another piece is a figurine torso (fig. 3.53:1; Ben-

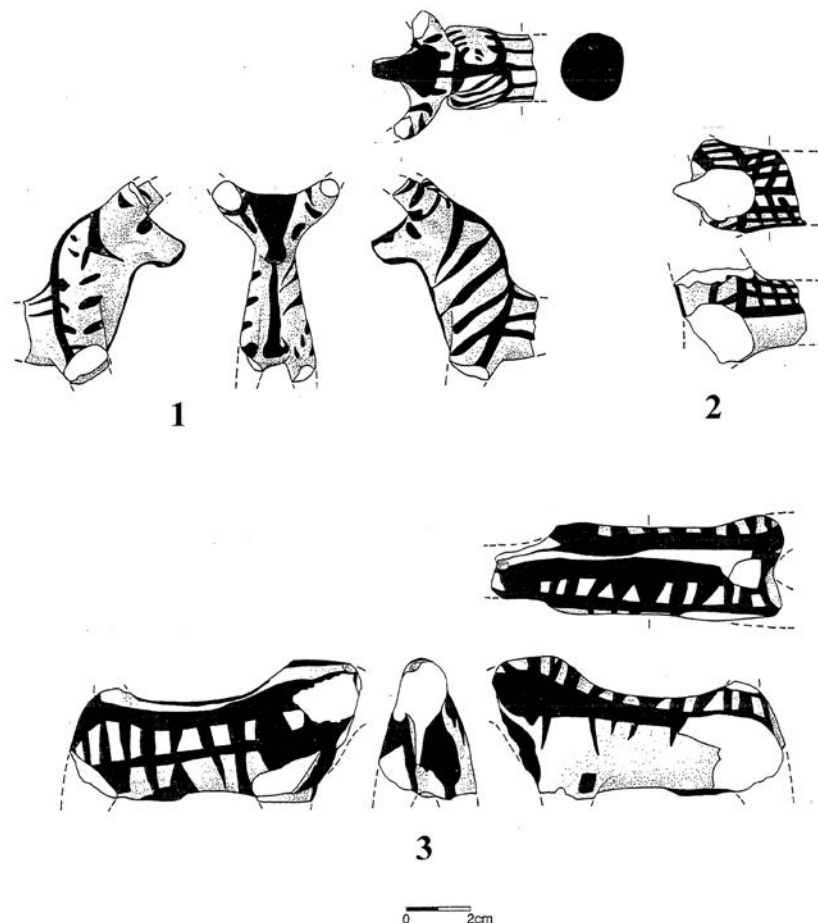


Figure 3.52. Aegean-style bull figurines from Ekron.

Shlomo and Press 2009: fig. 16:4), decorated by two shades of red with horizontal straight and wavy lines and dots scattered between them. This pattern may depict a harness and/or the hair texture or spots on the animal's body. Similar decorated figurines, usually identified as bovine, were found at Enkomi (Dikaios 1971: pl. 162:36) and in Late Helladic IIIB–C contexts at Tiryns (Zangger 1994: fig. 7; Weber-Hiden 1990: pl. 46:136; Kilian 1978: fig. 6), Mycenae (French 1971: pl. 26:a,d) and Phylakopi (French 1985: pl. 46:2348). The decoration on this figurines does not seem to depict any naturalistic details of the animal (and in some cases can even be quite imaginative), and probably has a certain stylistic function linked to Mycenaean decorative traditions. Another possibility is that at least some of the patterns on the figurines depict a harness or other implements placed on the animals.

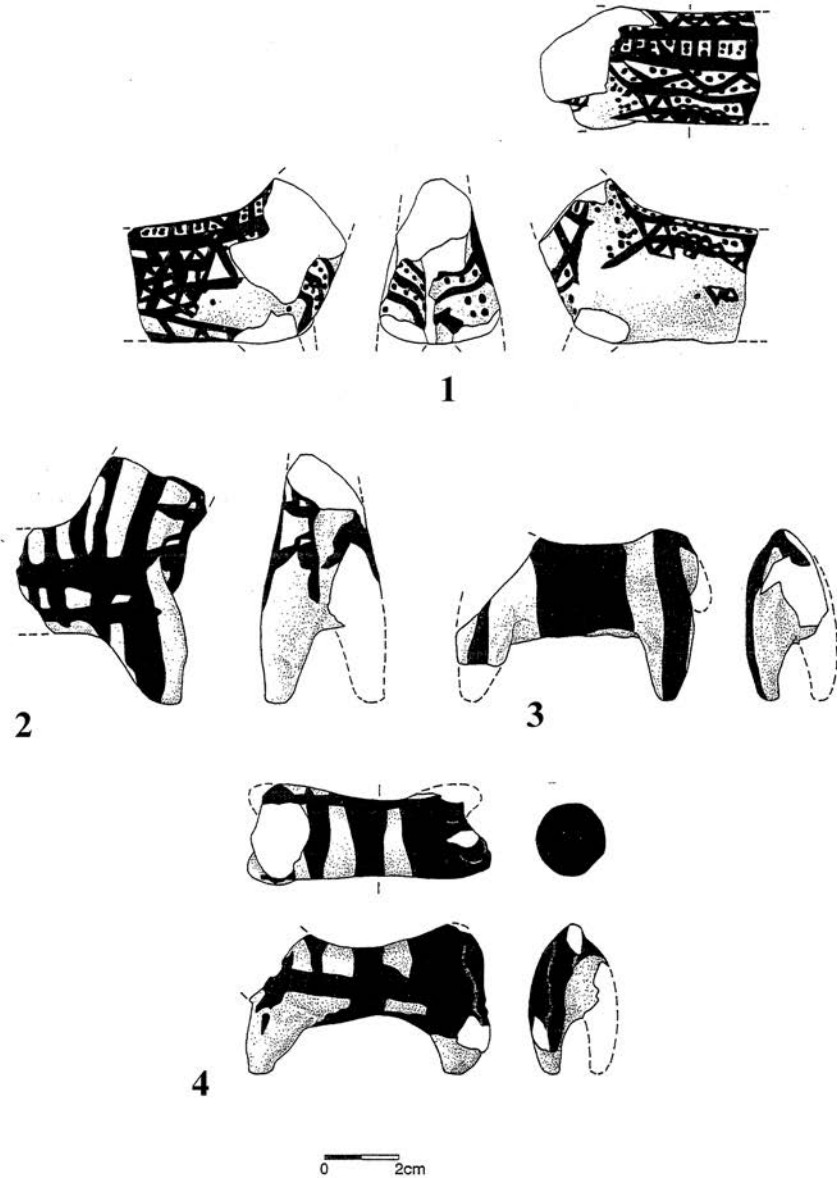


Figure 3.53. Aegean-style bull figurines from Ekron.

Other decorated bovine figurine fragments from Ekron are similar in form, but are not as well executed or as similar to the Mycenaean prototype, when comparing the raw material, firing, shape, decoration (its shade and quality) and surface finish (figs. 3.52:3, 3.53:2–3). A front part of a decorated figurine



has a reddish brown crisscross pattern, creating a ‘harness’ design (fig. 3.53:2; Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: 60, fig. 18); a pinched ridge on the neck depicts the dewlap; it was found near a Stratum VI pottery kiln in Field INE (Ben-Shlomo 2006b: 190). A complete neck and body (fig. 3.52:3; Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: fig. 16:3), with a similar pattern on the body, also shows a protrusion on the back, possibly depicting the *zebu* hump, while a pinched ridge depicts the dewlap. These naturalistic attributes are not so common in Mycenaean figurines. The decoration is made up of vertical and horizontal stripes, creating a ‘harness’ pattern (the ‘spine’ type decoration). A very similar figurine, also from an early 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE context, was found at Enkomi (Dikaios 1969–1971: 735, pl. 170.1160) and possibly another at Lefkandi (French 2006: 263, pl. 75:60). Several other decorated figurines from Ekron (fig. 3.53:3–4) show a more schematic decoration of wide vertical bands (fig. 3.53:3), or more carelessly drawn stripes (fig. 3.53:4). Two additional fragmentary examples from Ekron also have the typical rounded section and fine stripes motif (obj. nos. 6461 and 6519). Decorated Aegean-style bovine figurines of similar, cruder modeling come from Cyprus, and are probably locally made there as well; these include examples from Maa-Paleokastro (Karageorghis and Demas 1988: pls. 212:424, 171:150,154), Enkomi (Dikaios 1969–1971: pl. 131:41,43,45) and Sinda (Furumark and Adelman 2003: 118, pl. 37).

The similarity of these figurines and the Aegean prototypes can be seen in the choice and treatment of clay, body shaping, and mainly in the decoration, as the local tradition of zoomorphic figurines are almost never decorated with paint. The section of the Aegean-style figurines is round, creating a cylindrical (unrealistic) body in contrast to the non-decorated figurines, which have an ovoid body section (see below figs. 3.61–3.62). These figurine fragments probably represent bovines according to both the body details (such as dewlap and shoulder hump) and complete items known from the Aegean, indicating certain domestic cultic practices of the Philistines in relation to their Aegean/Cypriote origin.

*Ivory lid.* The only other possibly Aegean-style depiction of bovines is on an ivory lid from Ekron (fig. 3.54). A richly decorated lid of an ivory pyxis was found in a foundation trench of Building 350 at Ekron (Dothan 2003b, 2006; Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: 17, fig. 11:1), and probably shows strong connections with Aegean ivory carving traditions. The main register includes a scene with two bulls fighting a lion, in a ‘flying gallop’ posture, and a standing griffin; the lion’s head is turned back and his front legs are pulled forward; the limbs, mane and facial detail are emphasized by oval lines. The mane is ‘flame-styled’, a Levantine characteristic that was later assimilated into Mycenaean art (Kantor 1956: 170; 1960: 21). The ear is triangular, not trefoil as in Mycenaean ivories (Kantor 1960: 21). The two bulls are in ‘ramming position’; one has the lion’s body in between its long horns. The male sex organ is emphasized in both bulls, which are naturalistically depicted.

The griffin is compressed within and attacked by the two bulls. The depiction and posture of the griffin also reflect Aegean iconographic traditions (Kantor 1960: 19, as well as the example from LH IIIB Delos, in her fig. 10). One leg lies on the neck of the bull while the other is folded frontward; he faces backwards in a non-realistic manner; the feathers of the wings are also poorly depicted. The mouth is open as in battle scenes, a well-know Aegean-style depiction of the griffin. In the center there is an eight-leaved rosette surrounded by four concentric circles, and another five concentric circles in the external perimeter.



Figure 3.54. Ivory pyxis lid from Ekron with an animal battle scene (after Dothan 2006: fig. 4).

Similar depictions are found on ivory disks, lids and inlays from Megiddo Stratum VIIA (the griffin, Loud 1939: pl. 9:32), Kouklia-Paleopaphos (Poursat 1977: pl. XV:5–6), Enkomi (Courtois 1984: pl. 25:1–3) and Delos (Kantor 1956; see Dothan 2003b: 88–9, Dothan 2006: 35–9 for references). Fragments of similar lids or disks were also found at Kition, mostly in tombs (Karageorghis 1974: 33, 61, fig. 1, pls. 133:235, 150:19); these show scenes of bulls and other animals as well. Although the iconography and production technique of this lid show Aegean influences, it holds oriental or Canaanite features as well (see Dothan 2003b for discussion); generally, the distinction between the Aegean and eastern styles is not always clear cut, as influences were carried both ways (Rehak and Younger 1998: 251–2). The depiction of the griffin from Ekron was constrained by the limited area that was left after the other figures were depicted. Thus, this item shows a certain lack of planning in its execution, possibly indicating it was made in the Levant rather than in the Aegean. An heirloom from the Late Bronze Age cannot be ruled out as well.

### 3.2.1.2. *Philistine or hybrid style*

Basically, the items described in this section (mostly libation vessels) are categorized in the Philistine style only on account of their decorative style, yet not their morphology. They are either decorated in the Philistine Bichrome or LPDW style (see Ben-Shlomo 2008a). Thus, they can be perceived as a hybrid type of object combining Canaanite forms with Philistine decoration, yet, from the strict point of view of animal iconography, the representations can be considered to belong to the Canaanite style.

*Libation vessels.* Zoomorphic libation vessels or fragments of them are vessels which are containers modeled in the shape of an animal, make up much of the figurative pottery from Philistia, both of the early and late Iron Age. Animals depicted include bovines, birds, equines and a hedgehog. A large assemblage of over 200 objects was found at Ekron (see table 2),<sup>29</sup> and smaller assemblages were recovered at Tel Ashdod, Tel Qasile and other sites (Ben-Shlomo 1999, 2008a).

Technical aspects: Zoomorphic vessels are comprised of several components that also dictate their style and iconography. These include a body, spout, and various applied elements, including legs, tail, wings, dewlap and handles. Wheel-made bodies, for example a jug, are thrown, but the upper opening is subsequently closed, creating a navel-shaped inner closure. A similar technique was probably used to make flasks. Iron Age II zoomorphic vessels are predominantly wheel-made, while in the Iron Age I they were both hand and wheel-made (Ben-Shlomo 1999; Ben-Shlomo 2008a: 25,27). Hand-made libation vessels are manufactured either by emptying a clay body or by flattening the clay from the inside and then closing it; another method used is folding a flattened clay sheet or a shallow bowl. Libation vessels have at least two pierced apertures; the filling spout or intake, applied on the back or side of the body, and the pouring spout, usually through the head or neck. Spouts were made separately, either by hand or wheel, with wheel-made head spouts usually manufactured as a wedge-shaped neck (e.g., figs. 3.56:5, 3.60:1–2), with the upper part wider, and the details applied onto it. The edge of the spout was either vertically cut or modeled into various forms – rounded or carinated (e.g., figs. 3.56:4, 3.57:3), while the eyes were applied pellets and the horns and ears also applied, often together. Ears were sometimes formed by pinching the lower parts of the horns. The head was further modeled to create eye sockets, brows or other details. Two spouts from Ekron (fig. 3.60:5–6) have ears and horns that were made by twisting the upper part of the head and are unusual. Other components were also

<sup>29</sup> Only the iconographic aspects of the unpublished zoomorphic vessels and zoomorphic figurines from Ekron is treated here. This should not be considered the final publication of these items, which will appear elsewhere (in the Final Publications Series of Tel Mique-Ekron).

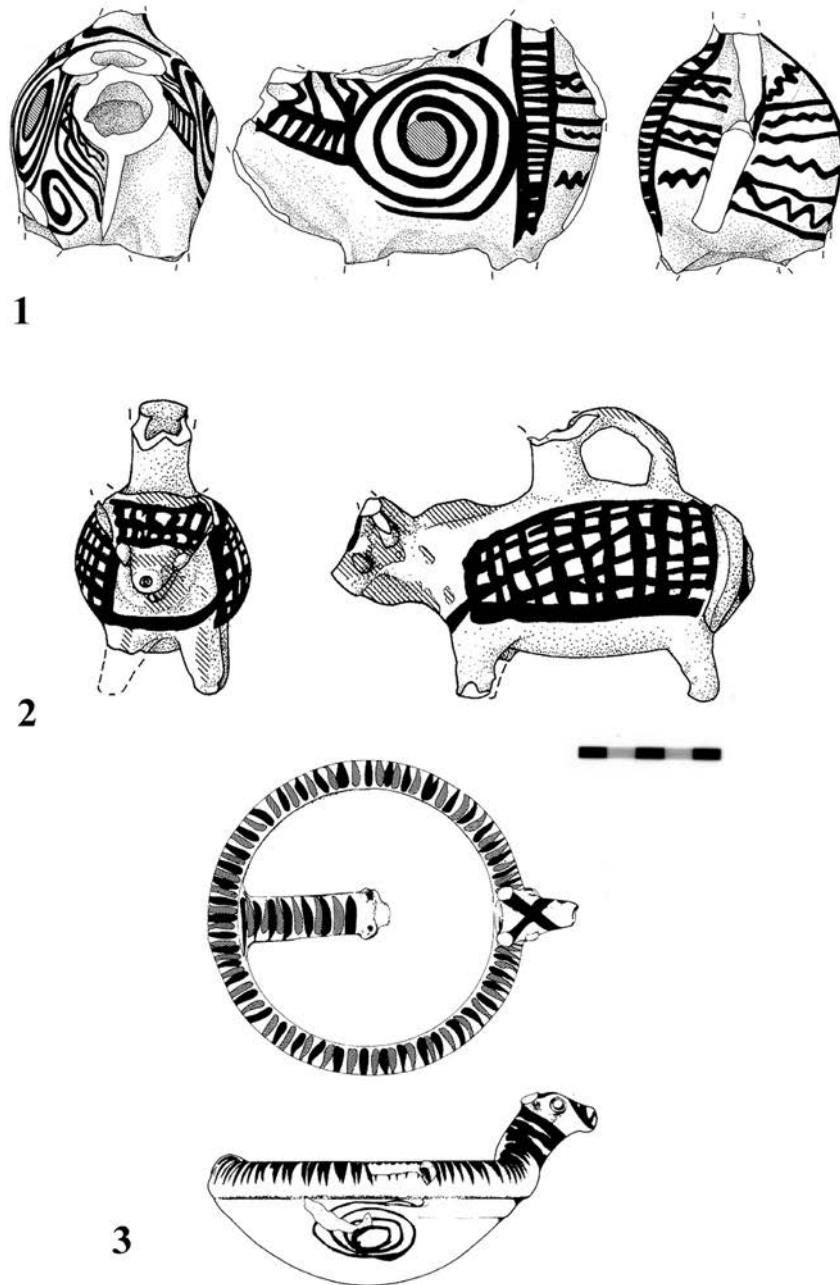


Figure 3.55. Philistine Bichrome bull vessels and a kernos bowl from Beth Shemesh.

applied to the body of the vessel, such as the legs, tail, wings, dewlap, mane and hump. All these, together with the spouts, were applied when the body was leather-hard. Further treatment included slip, burnish and decoration.

Philistine Bichrome zoomorphic libation vessels (fig. 3.55) are characterized by their typical black and red decoration and thick chalky white slip, at times with typical Philistine motifs. The shapes of these vessels, however, do not show any Philistine or Aegean affinities. The most typical example from Ekron is a small cylindrical body of a zoomorphic vessel (ca. 0.125 liter capacity), decorated by straight and wavy lines and spirals in red and black over a white wash (fig. 3.55:1; Ben-Shlomo 2008a: fig. 2:1). The animal depicted cannot be positively identified, although the stout body and dewlap suggest that it is a bull. The decoration is a rendering of known common motifs on Philistine pottery, such as spirals, ladders and wavy lines between straight lines. The decoration does not attempt to depict realistic features of the animal or integrate them with the shape of the vessel (although the 'ladder' designs on front and back of the body may be an attempt to depict a harness).

Another complete example is an intact, hand-made bovine libation vessel, found in a Stratum VIA room. The item is somewhat larger, white-slipped and decorated in bichrome (fig. 3.55:2, Ben-Shlomo 2008a: fig. 2:2). The vessel has many anatomical details (somewhat similar to fig. 3.57:1, discussed below). The main decoration is a black net pattern on both sides of the body and on the forehead, over a white slip. Patches of red paint emphasize the hump, the forehead and the dewlap. Although the design is not typically Philistine, the technique of red and black decoration on white slip is. The design may either depict a harness or a mat lying on the animal's back. A similarly decorated zoomorphic vessel was found at Tel Dor associated, according to Stern, with the 'Sikil city' of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE (Stern 2006: 391, fig. 4:a). Headless zoomorphic vessels with a similar decoration were found at Gezer (Macalister 1912: fig. 205) and at Tell Abu Hawam (Hamilton 1935: 41, no. 248). A similar zoomorphic vessel body with a harness design, albeit dated to the 10<sup>th</sup> century BCE, was found at Horbat Rosh Zayit (Gal and Alexandre 2000: 80, fig. 3.92:1). Note, though, that these latter vessels are not decorated in the Philistine Bichrome style.

Kernos bowls (see below) from Tel Qasile (Mazar 1980: 106–8, fig. 39) and Beth Shemesh (fig. 3.55:3) are also decorated in the typical Philistine Bichrome style, and depict two schematic head spouts, probably bovine, attached to the ring's rim, with an outer pouring spout and an inner intake. Several kernos fragments from Ekron are also decorated in Philistine Bichrome style.

An almost complete wheel-made bovine libation vessel from Ekron is of the LPDW style (fig. 3.56:1, Ben-Shlomo 2008a:30, fig. 5:1) and has an applied vertical tail. The vessel is decorated using black decoration with traces of white color over a burnished red slip, and the black lines around the body create a harness design. A somewhat similar but smaller vessel



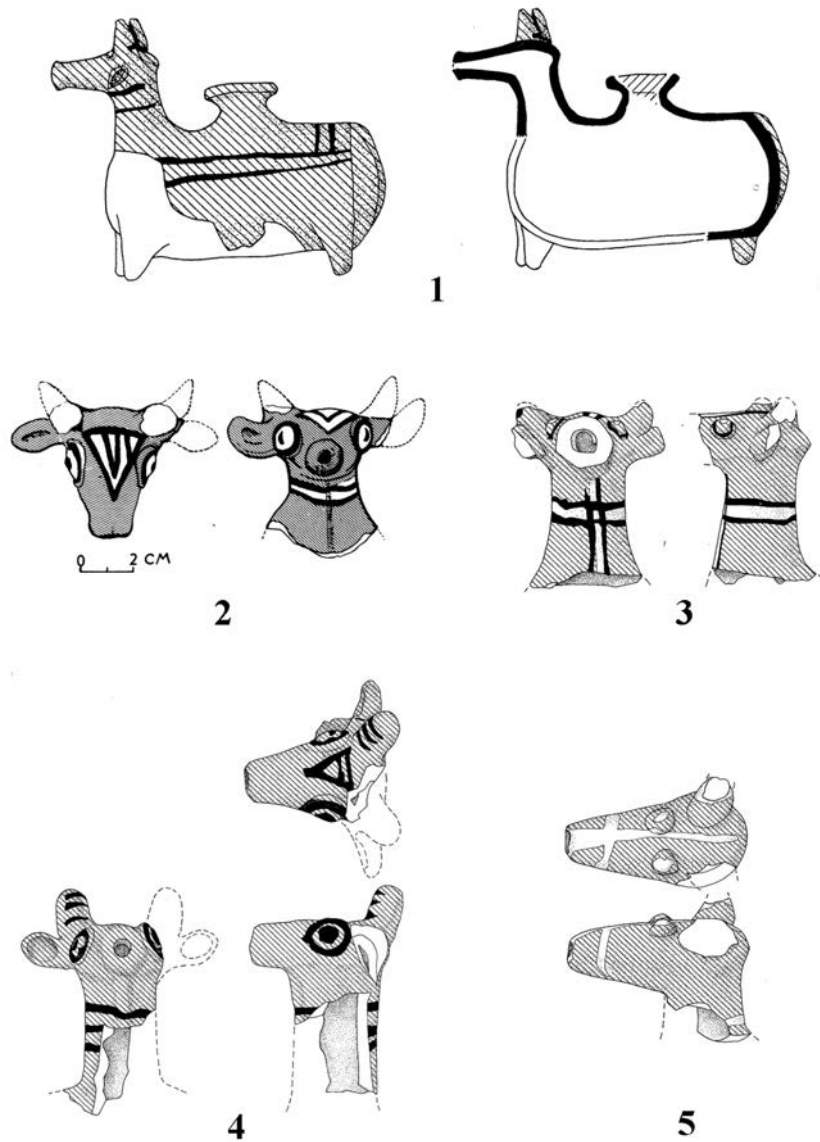


Figure 3.56. Late Philistine (LPDW) Iron IIA bull vessels from Ekron.

was found in Stratum X at Ashdod (Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 184, fig. 3.79:1). Many zoomorphic head spouts of vessels and keroi decorated in this style (typically termed 'LPDW', see above) were found in Iron Age II Ashdod (e.g., fig. 3.56:2–5; Dothan 1971: 125–35, figs. 66–71; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 197, fig. 3.86), dating mostly to the 10<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE



(Strata X–VIII). Several LPDW horned head spouts from Ekron are decorated with triangles, circles or other shapes on their forehead (fig. 3.56:2–4). These include a red-slipped and burnished horned head spout, appearing as early as Stratum IV (fig. 3.56:4), which is decorated in black, including a black triangle on the forehead. The triangle has an inner line, parallel to the base. Horned head spouts with triangles, circles or other shapes decorating the forehead are common at Ashdod (fig. 3.56:2, Dothan 1971: fig. 69:1–6). This decoration may be a direct or indirect reference to the Egyptian god Apis, depicted with the sun rising between his horns (Hornung 1982: 109–13; Wilkinson 1992: 58). It may also be a depiction of an ornament hung on the bull's forehead. The same decoration appears on Iron Age bull masks from Cyprus (Karageorghis 1971: fig. 7). Two additional wheel-made horned head spouts with red slip and burnish (fig. 3.56:3,5) are quite similar to late Iron Age spouts from Ashdod (Dothan 1971: fig. 68:6), and are decorated with a black and white pattern on the upper snout.

Note that a bull's head (bucranium) probably appears on an Iron Age I seal from Ashdod (fig. 3.31:1; see above) together with two schematic figures in a ceremonial composition and in 'linear' style, paralleled in Cypriote glyptics.

### 3.2.1.3. *Canaanite style*

*Libation vessels.* This group includes Iron Age I bull-shaped libation vessels, which according to their shape and decoration do not show any Philistine characteristics, rather relate to local Canaanite traditions. A complete hand-made bovine libation vessel (fig. 3.57:1, Ben-Shlomo 2008a: 36, fig. 9:1; capacity ca. 0.16 liter) was found in an open area of Field IVNW, Stratum VIIIB at Ekron (see also Dothan 2003a: 196, fig. 4). It has a filling spout on the back. The dewlap and a hump, typical of Asiatic *zebu*-type bovines (*Bos Indicus*), are depicted, and the vessel is incised on the body and scraped near the legs. The naturalistic modeling is not common in zoomorphic vessels of the Late Bronze or Iron Ages in Palestine, while the scraping may indicate an attempt to imitate Cypriot pottery. Though broken, the legs seem to be spread quite outwardly, creating a certain 'leaping' posture.<sup>30</sup> A head spout from Ekron (obj. no. 6691) and a head of a larger bovine vessel from Ashdod Stratum XII (fig. 3.57:2; Dothan and Porath 1993: fig. 35:11) are modeled quite similarly, especially in relation to the emphasis of the flat forehead.

<sup>30</sup> The 'leaping' posture occasionally appears on Base Ring II bovine vessels, e.g. from Maroni (Johnson 1980: pl. 24:128), or the Persian Garden (Gershuny 1991: 42, pl. 7:51). Images of bulls in a similar leaping posture appear on the Ayia Triadha sarcophagus (Long 1974: 47–8, figs. 17, 37, 52), and offering vessels with the same posture appear in depictions in Theban tombs (Wachsmann 1987: pl. 18); these were probably made of precious materials. While the vessel from Ekron may be a late echo of the Aegean and Egyptian depictions, it does not have any direct parallels from the Aegean or Cyprus.

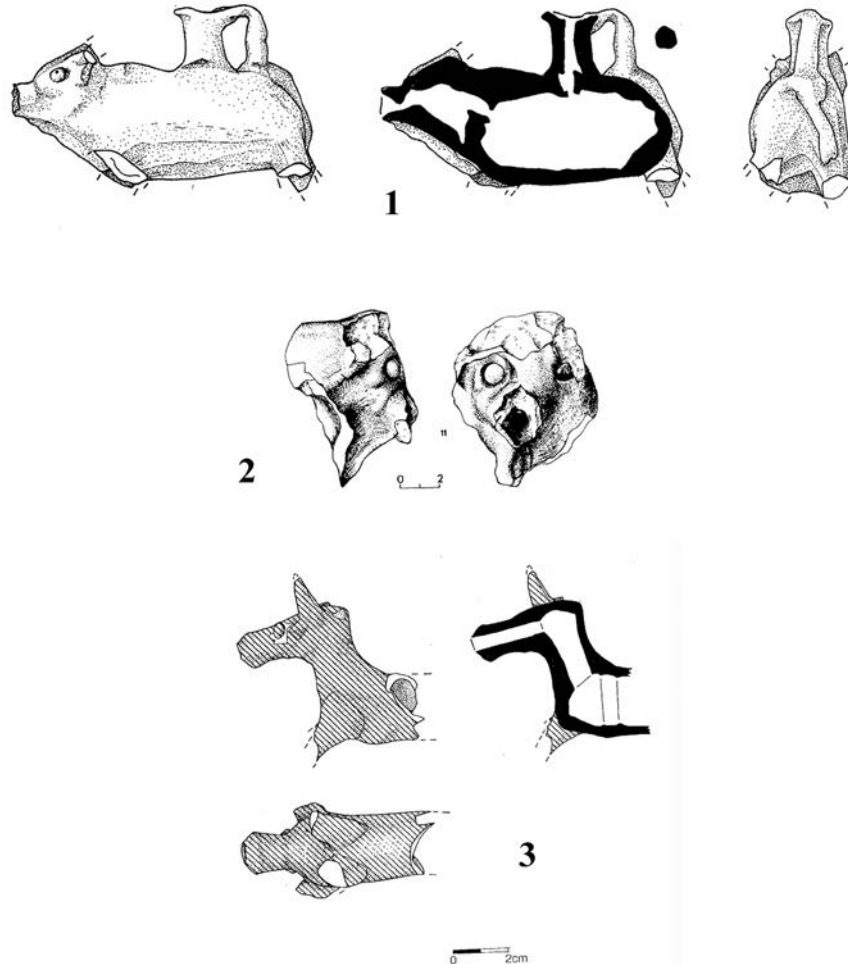


Figure 3.57. Bull vessels from Ekron.

*Iron IIB–C bovine vessels.* A large group of zoomorphic vessels from Ekron (fig. 3.58–3.59), mostly wheel-made bovine libation vessels, come from Stratum II (late 8<sup>th</sup>–early 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE) or the Stratum IB destruction layer. At least 30 objects – five complete vessels and 25 head spouts and body fragments – and 28 other body fragments or head spouts, probably belong to one, rather uniform type of vessel (figs. 3.58–3.59; Ben-Shlomo 2008a: 32–3, figs. 6–7). The type is distinguished by a large barrel-shaped body – ca. 25 cm long and 16 cm high, with a capacity of ca. 1 liter. The head spout and body are wheel-made, and the body is a large jug- or barrel-shape. There are no signs of a handle. The front and back are rounded hemispheres, creating a carination along which the four stumpy legs are applied. The tail

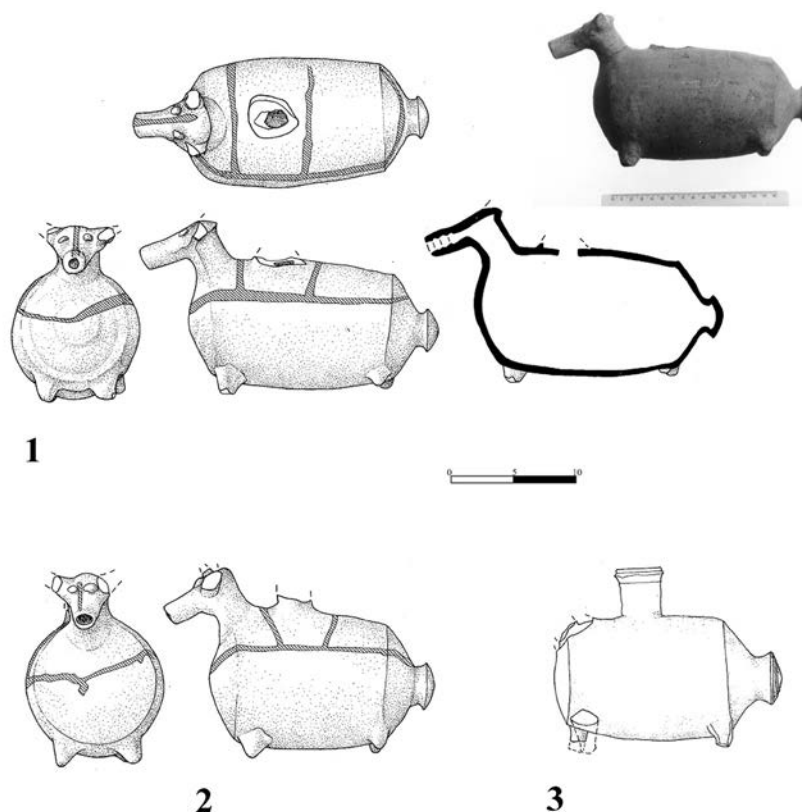
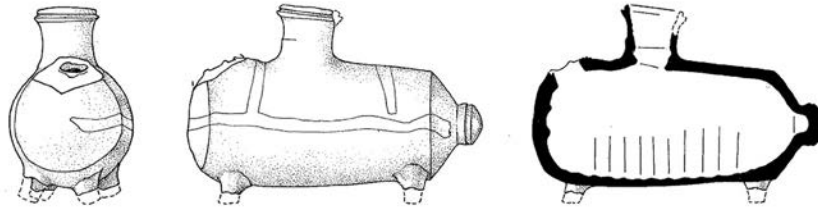


Figure 3.58. Iron IIB-C bull vessels from Ekron.

is abstractly depicted, thrown (not applied) as a hollow button-shaped protrusion. The body is decorated with red-orange lines, with one long horizontal line circling the body and two shorter ones crossing the back. This design probably depicts a harness. Another line is painted along the snout (fig. 3.58:1).

Of the complete examples, one vessel was found in a basin in the olive oil factory in Field IIINE, Stratum IB (fig. 3.58:2). The basin was in secondary use and contained a mixed assemblage of artifacts. Another complete vessel of this type (fig. 3.58:1) was found near the basin, under one of the weights of an olive press. It is quite similar, although its snout and body are more elongated. Another headless body was found in Room v of Temple Complex 650 (fig. 3.59:1), just behind the sanctuary's cella (see Gitin 1998: 173–4, fig. 11 for the context). The body in this example is relatively slender and elongated, and the button-shaped tail is less marked. A similar vessel (fig. 3.58:3), found in the Field INW Stratum IB Building 761, Room a, has a more barrel-shaped body and a marked button-shaped tail; a vessel from



1



2

Figure 3.59. Iron IIB-C bull vessels from Ekron.

an unstratified context (obj. no. 5937) is very similar to it. Two other large bovine head spouts (fig. 3.60:1–2) are also examples of the same type of vessel.

In this group of libation vessels, the animal is modeled rather schematically, with the horned head and ‘token’ tail being emphasized, but the dewlap and other body details not appearing. This may imply that such vessels were produced on an ‘industrial’ basis. Their relatively large capacity, compared to the early Iron Age vessels, for example, may indicate that they were used as containers and libation vessels, possibly in association to cultic activities conducted in relation to the olive oil industry, in the presses and the main temple. Also note that they do not have a handle, as opposed to many smaller libation vessels. The floruit of this type of zoomorphic vessel is in Stratum IB, but a number of fragments from Strata III–II may suggest that they also appear earlier, thus indicating a possible time-span of at least 150 years. In this case, the vessels may exhibit a degree of cultural continuity in the Philistine city of Ekron through the various stages of the Iron Age.

Similar, although not identical, bovine libation vessels have been published from various contemporary sites in southern Israel, for example, Tel

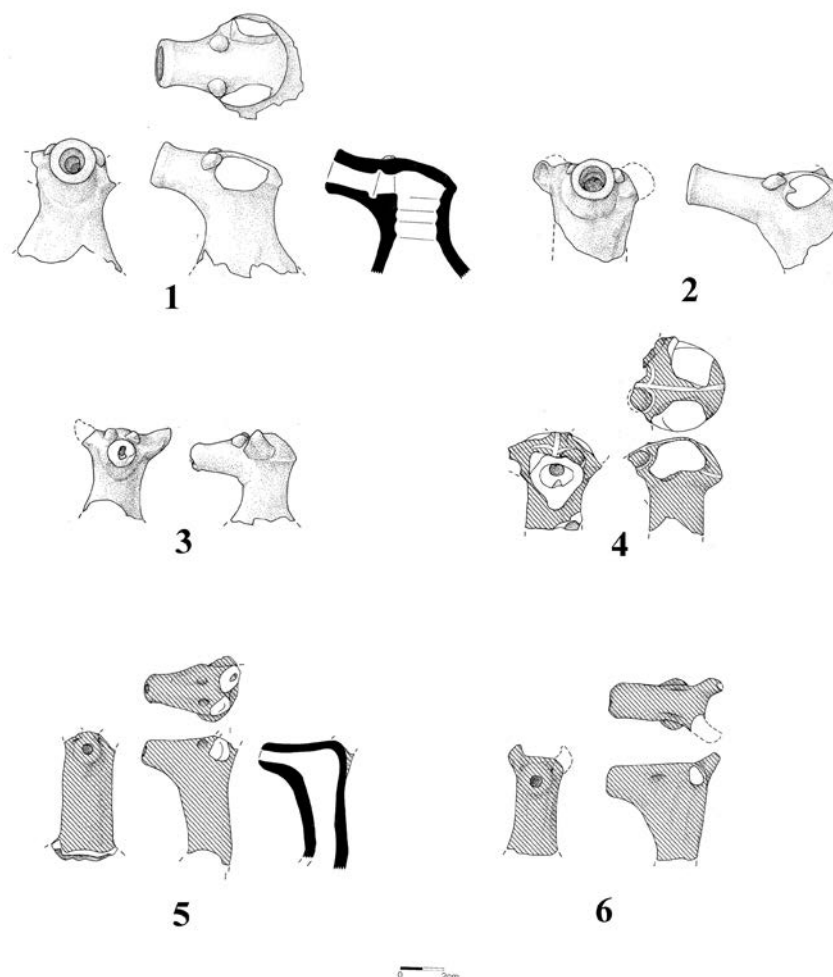


Figure 3.60. Horned head spots from Ekron and Ashdod.

Batash (Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2001: 210, pl. 56:4), Beer Sheba, Stratum II (Aharoni 1973: pl. 28.4), Tell Beit Mirsim, Stratum A (Albright 1943: pl. 27:b1; pl. 58:1), Beth Shemesh, Stratum II (Mackenzie 1913: pl. XXXIII:12; Grant 1934: pl. 28:73), Lachish, Strata III–II (Tufnell 1953: 198, 376, pl. 30:26, 8), and possibly Gezer (Dever, Lance and Wright 1970: 58, fig. 37.9).<sup>31</sup> A similar zoomorphic vessel in terms of its size, shape

<sup>31</sup> This vessel, found in an Early Iron Age stratum of the 11<sup>th</sup> century BCE, has a button-shaped tail, but otherwise differs from the Ekron vessels in that it is much smaller. As the head is broken, it cannot be securely identified as bovine.

and spout, found at Tyre can be dated to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE (Bikai 1978: pls. VI:1, 83:6). As it may be one of the earliest examples, a Phoenician origin may be proposed for these objects. Similarly shaped bovine vessels or hollow figures with a button-shaped tail also appear in Cyprus (Karageorghis 1996: 33, pl. 18:4–7), although they are dated somewhat later, to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>32</sup> It should be noted, however, that although these examples are similar to the vessels from Ekron, specifically in regard to the button-shaped tail, they are not as uniformly executed and they vary in size and modeling technique. Therefore, it is suggested that this type of bovine libation vessel can be tentatively classified as a late ‘Philistine’ regional type of the final phases of the Iron Age (typical of Ekron), and thus be considered the latest stylistic development of Philistine zoomorphic vessels.

An almost complete red-slipped wheel-made ‘miniature’ bovine vessel, 6.5 cm long (fig. 3.57:3), was found at Ekron Stratum IIB, and is quite similar to the large-scale vessels described above, other than the red slip and burnish. The object may represent an earlier ‘proto-type’ of the large bovine vessels that appear in Stratum IB. A horned head spout (fig. 3.60:3) may also come from such a miniature bovine vessel.

*Iron Age I bovine figurines.* This section will discuss a group of handmade figurines and figurine fragments found mostly at Ekron (fig. 3.61–3.62); the majority of these are from Iron Age I contexts. A few similar figurines were published from Ashdod (e.g., fig. 3.62:6; Dothan 1971: fig. 3:4; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 123, fig. 3.36:8; possibly also Dothan and Porath 1993: 79, fig. 35:7), and they were reported from Iron I levels at Ashkelon as well (R. Voss and M. Press, personal communication, Press 2007: 140–48, fig. 14:3–4). A large number of zoomorphic figurines were found at Tell Jemmeh (Petrie 1928: pls. 36–8). While their contexts, and thus their date are often difficult to determine, many probably date to the Iron Age. These figurines are relatively small and crudely made with hardly any decoration and coarse clay, rich with organic temper. The vessels are poorly or incompletely fired, and in many cases black soot residues are visible, possibly attesting to contact with direct fire. Most details are created by pinching the clay rather than by application.

<sup>32</sup> Eighteen hollow, wheel-made bovine figures and vessels found in the Limassol area, which date to the Cypro-Archaic II period (6<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE), are somewhat similar to the common type from Ekron, especially group B (Karageorghis 1977: 61–2, fig. 13; Nys 1999: 187, figs. 5:a, 8). Nys identifies this group as originating from one workshop, based on the manufacturing technique (1999: 187). Although these objects are hollow figures and not libation vessels, the phenomenon of a localized industry of a certain type of zoomorphic vessel may be paralleled at Ekron in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE.



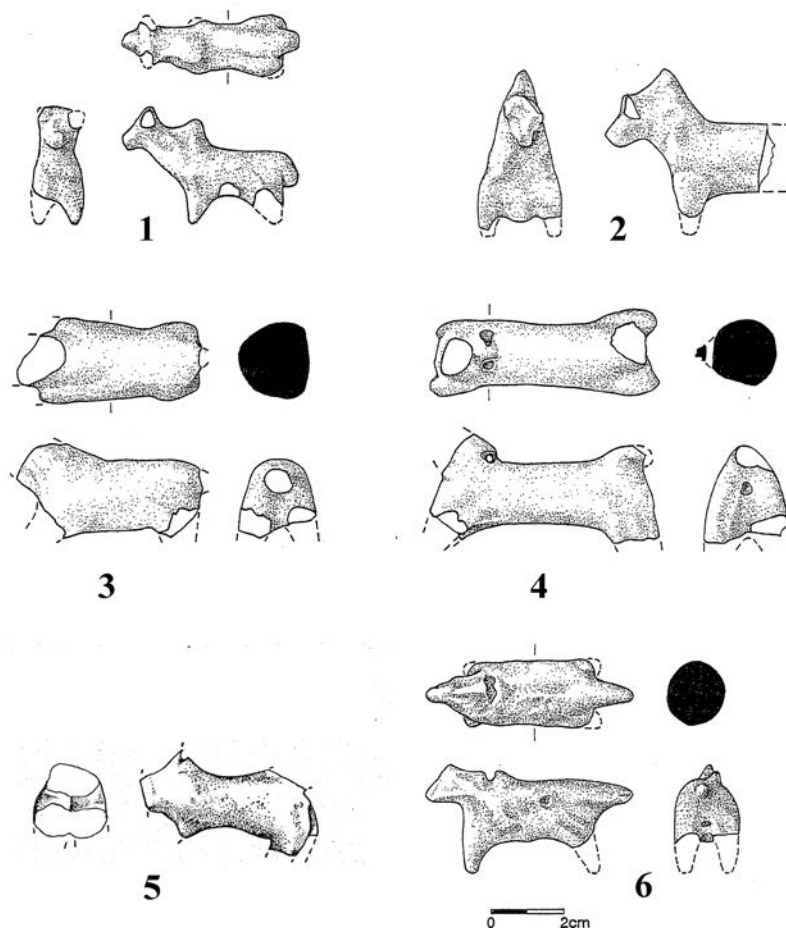


Figure 3.61. Animal figurines from Ekron.

In many cases the species depicted cannot be definitely identified, as the objects are fragmentary, or lack indicative anatomic details.<sup>33</sup> Despite this, it seems that the most dominant animal depicted is the bull, while other identified animals are horses/donkeys, goat, dogs and birds. Bull figurines can usually be identified by their horned head, but unfortunately this detail is often not preserved. Other identifying details, although not definitive, may be the hump on the back or nape (typical of the Asiatic zebu – *Bos Indicus* – bovine,

<sup>33</sup> In an analysis of nearly 400 zoomorphic figurines from an Early Dynastic context at Tell Mozan, the identification of species was carried out according to a careful examination of details and body proportions, using comparisons to real animals (Hauser 2007: 3–11, 561–625, table 1); the result was that most were identified as Ovis/Capro and Equis.

fig. 3.61:1–2), the dewlap on the neck and the body with the stumpy ovoid-section (e.g., figs. 3.61:1–2, 5–6, 3.62:2–3). The tail is usually turned to the side and hanging down (figs. 3.61:4, 3.62:2); altogether twelve figurines from Ekron can be clearly identified as bovine. A complete bovine figurine (fig. 3.61:1), found on a Stratum VIB ash floor in the entrance to Building 351, is a small, but relatively detailed example. The details include the horned head, a prominent hump and the dewlap; a piercing in the stomach may depict the female genitalia; there are also fingernail impressions on the neck area. Another figurine is nearly complete and also depicts a humped Asiatic *zebu* bovine (obj. no. 3203). The front of the figurine (fig. 3.61:2) has a schematic head with two pinched horns or ears; a triangular applied bulge on the nape may identify this figurine as one of an Asiatic bovine, while a round ball-shaped pellet is applied between the front legs; the figurine also has soot marks. The ball between the legs may depict the lower dewlap of the animal or an object tied to it. There is another figurine from Ekron with a similarly applied ball (IAA no. 92–5129 found in the survey), with one other possible parallel coming from Samaria (Holland 1975: fig. 53.2). Other figurine bodies from Ekron also have signs of humps (fig. 3.61:3; obj. nos. 817, 106 and 2161) and all come from Iron Age I contexts. Most bodies have an ovoid section and a typical slightly rising tail turning to the side. Another surface find is a complete, tiny (2 by 2 cm) *zebu* bovine figurine (obj. no. 4); the hump, horns and tail are modeled very accurately.

An almost complete figurine (fig. 3.61:6) has a ridge preserved on the back of it, which is applied, crudely made and pierced. This ridge probably served as a hanger, and may have also depicted a bovine hump or an equine mane; the tail points backwards; a perforation between the rear legs depicts the female genitalia. Other examples with a similar ‘hanger’ on the back (fig. 3.61:4–5), probably depict bovines; fig. 3.61:4 has the pierced female genitalia depicted at its rear.<sup>34</sup> There are about 25 other figurine torsos from Ekron which do not carry any immediate details of identification (as fig. 3.62:1–3). As these have ovoid stumpy bodies, and tail that are usually rising and turning to the side, they probably depict bovines. Several examples have fingernail marks, such as fig. 3.62:2, which also has a perforation in the rear stomach, probably depicting the female genitalia, similarly to other fragments (fig. 3.61:4, 3.62:1); one of the fragments (fig. 3.62:1) has two perforations under the tail, depicting the female genitalia and the anus.

<sup>34</sup> Several zoomorphic figurines that are quite similar, yet dating quite earlier (to the beginning of the second millennium BCE) were found in Chagar Bazar and the Habur region. Some of the figurines, identified as zebu bulls, equines or dogs have a perforation through the mane or muzzle (Mallowan 1936: 21–2, fig. 5:14, 17–18; Mallowan 1937: 129–30, fig. 10:1–2, 6). One of the figurines is a zebu, decorated with a harness design (Mallowan 1937: fig. 10:30), while another has a protrusion between its front legs (Mallowan 1936: fig. 5:17), similar to fig. 3.61:2 from Ekron. These examples, though much earlier than the Iron I, may suggest the Syro-Palestine nature of the zoomorphic figurines from Ekron.

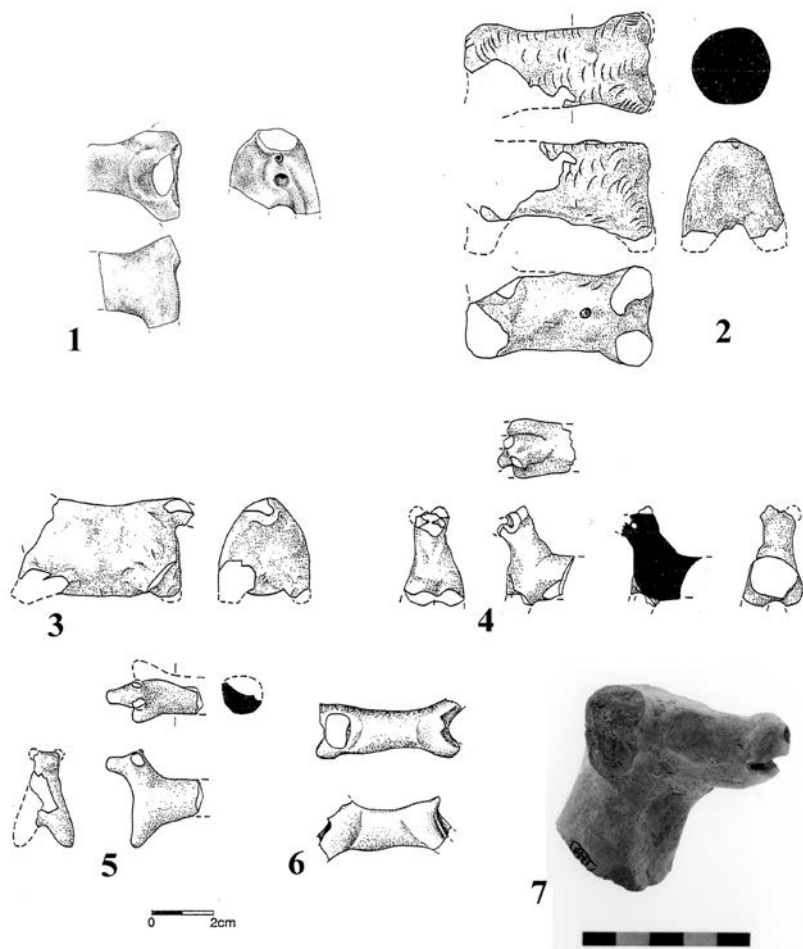


Figure 3.62. Animal figurines from Ekron and Ashdod.

Zoomorphic clay figurines, including bovines, appear in the southern Levant from at least the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B period. Although zoomorphic figurines seem to be more abundant (or at least published more) during the PPNB-Pottery Neolithic periods, they continue to appear (not always identified) during all periods.<sup>35</sup> Examples of crude, hand-made bovine figurines

<sup>35</sup> For Neolithic period zoomorphic figurines from Munhata see, e.g., Garfinkel 1995 (including humped bovines – *idem*: 43, pl. 17:3, fig. B2.1). A group of PPNB zoomorphic figurines with inserted flint blades were found at 'Ain Ghazal (Rollefson and Simmons 1986: fig. 10, also Schmandt-Besserat 1997). For Early Bronze II–III zoomorphic figurines from Megiddo see Loud 1948: pl. 244:5–10; for Tel Yarmouth see Miroshedji 1988: 85, pls. 26:1–13, 46:3–13; Tel Dan, Biran 1992: 36, fig. 16.

(frequently with the *zebu* hump) occur at other Iron Age sites; they seem to be more common in Iron Age I contexts (e.g. Beth Shemesh, Grant 1934: pl. LI.7; Tell Jemmeh, Petrie 1928: pl. 37:3; Jericho, Kenyon and Holland 1982: pl. 225.9). The rising number of bovine figurines during the Iron Age I at Ekron and possibly at other Philistine sites may have significance as another distinctive element in the early Philistine material culture. Note the absence of any clear male depictions in contrast to several depictions of female genitalia. This could coincide with the dominance of female anthropomorphic figurines in Philistia in some way (see Maeir 2006: 340–1 for the dominance of female zoomorphic depictions in Philistia). Furthermore, the consistent soot marks may indicate that they were used in some ritual associated with fire.

Similar crude zoomorphic figurines appear in various locations in the eastern Mediterranean during the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE; especially important are examples published from the Greek mainland, Crete and Cyprus. Undecorated crude zoomorphic figurines were published from LH IIIC Tiryns Unterburg (Kilian 1978: 451–2, fig. 7; M. Vettters, personal communication<sup>36</sup>) as well as LH IIIC Lefkandi (French 2006: 258, 263, pls. 74:58, 85, 87–8, 75:65). Cretan LM IIIC examples come from Agia Triadha (D'Agata 1999: 59, pl. 26:C1.44–5). Similar and other types of crude zoomorphic figurines have quite a long history in Cretan 'peak sanctuaries' as well (e.g., Karetsou 1981: 147, fig. 21; Hayden 1991: 113–16; Peatfield 1992: 72, fig. 17). Cypriot examples come from Enkomi (Dikaïos 1971: 692, pls. 131:39–40, 131:46–48, 137:16–16a, 177:1–4) and Maa-Paleokastro (Karageorghis and Demas 1988: pls. 120:18, 113, 200:317). These figurines are not predominant in these sites, but they do not seem to occur earlier (as in LH IIIA–B levels). Generally, it seems that the Cypriot and Aegean figurines are similar to the Philistine ones in terms of manufacture, clay, shaping and animals represented, including mostly bovines, although other species as well.

The rising number of bovine figurines during the early Iron Age at Ekron may also be connected to a rise in the economic value of this animal during the period (this can also be partly reflected in the archaeozoological data from Ekron, see Hesse 1986; Lev-Tov 2006). However, this phenomenon may also be part of a regional east Mediterranean cultural element that existed during the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Thus, although these figurines are considered Canaanite or 'local' in style and the images they convey, they may in fact be another aspect of the immigrant culture of the Philistines within this context of Philistia (see further discussion in Chapter 4). It is possible that these objects represent some type of domestic cult, voodoo-like practices or sympathetic witchcraft (for example, similar to those attributed to Neolithic

<sup>36</sup> I wish to thank Melissa Vettters of Heidelberg University, who is currently working on the figurines from Tiryns, for informing me on some of her yet unpublished results. It should also be noted that there is a good chance that some of these objects were not published or not recognized on account of their fragmentary and coarse nature.

bovine figurines – Schmandt-Besserat 1997). Such cult practices may have been transferred between the various parts of the eastern Mediterranean in association with groups of immigrants.

*Bulls in the Yavneh assemblage.* As noted above, bovines are the most popular zoomorphic motif on the Yavneh cultic stands (figs. 3.63–3.64; Ziffer and Kletter 2007:19–20). They appear as heads and protomes in the stands, while two stands (nos. 2006-1016, 2006-1022) display the full figured animals, in profile view. In most cases, the bulls appear either alone, with a nude female or with a tree. They are often depicted as protruding from the walls of the stand or from a window (e.g., fig. 3.64, Ziffer and Kletter 2007: nos. 2006-1004, 2006-1023, 2006-1051, 2006-1056, 2006-1060, 2006-1070, 2006-990, 2006-1005, 2006-1045); they appear on the roof of the stand, as gargoyles, as well (no. 2006-1011). In some cases, the nude female is standing on the bull (no. 2006-1036). The heads of the bulls are modeled in two styles: either with a pointed snout, quite similar to common Iron Age figurines depicting bulls discussed above (as in fig. 3.64, Ziffer and Kletter 2007: nos. 2006-1023, 2006-1040, 2006-994, 2006-1004), or with a cylindrical snout, often with two perforations for the nostrils and a horizontal incision below depicting the mouth (fig. 3.63; Ziffer and Kletter 2007: nos. 2006-1011, 2006-1060, 2006-1029 – in this latter case, the horns are decorated by a series of dents). This latter style is similar to depictions of figurines from Ekron (fig. 3.62:7), Ashkelon and Qitmit noted below (possibly more of a ‘southern’ style). Otherwise, in most cases, the horns are large and emphasized, while other facial and body details are not depicted on the representations. In general, the bull depictions from the Yavneh assemblage conform to the Canaanite style of



Figure 3.63. A cultic stand from Yavneh with bulls (no. 2006-1060; photograph: Leonid Padrul).



Figure 3.64. A cultic stand from Yavneh with bulls  
(no. 2006-1070; photograph: Leonid Padrul).

bovine iconography. It remains an open question as to whether the frequent appearance of the bulls on these cultic stands reflects the religious symbolism of bulls (possibly as consorts for goddesses), or that they represent more domestic and pastoral symbolism, which are integrated into certain scenes depicted on the stands (a combination of both meanings is possible too).

*Iron Age II Figurines.* Only a few zoomorphic figurines come from secure Iron Age II contexts at Ekron (as fig. 3.62:4,7; also obj. nos. 1937, 3127, 1844, 1768), and include several horned figurines. Of these, a very small bull figurine shows a hump on the bulgy, a long neck and remains of a horned head (fig. 3.62:4). A figurine head from Stratum II is a different type of bovine figurine (fig. 3.62:7). This is a large solid head and neck of a bovine, either belonging to a large hollow figurine or a figurative cult stand fragment. The thick, solid head is illustrated in naturalistic detail: snout, nostrils, incised mouth and neck, similar to heads from Ashkelon (Press 2007: 140, fig. 13:4–5, cat. no. 160), bulls from the Yavneh stands (see above, e.g., fig. 3.63), figurines from the sanctuary of Qitmit dating to the late 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE (Beck 1995: 125–6, fig. 3.88.120–21, although these heads are quite larger<sup>37</sup>), and Iron Age II Tel Beit Mirsim (Albright 1943: pl. 38.6).

<sup>37</sup> Interestingly, one of the heads from Qitmit has a decoration on its forehead. The design is of a circle within a triangle – very similar to bovine head spouts from Ekron and Ashdod (see above, fig. 3.56:2–4). This re-occurrence at various Iron Age sites may imply a distinctive religious meaning of this symbolism throughout most of the Iron Age in southern Palestine; as noted above, it may be connected with Egyptian influence.



### 3.2.2. *The horse/donkey*

Equines are portrayed to a much lesser extent than bovines in the material culture of Philistia. All representations can be considered as local Canaanite style, however note that these animals do not seem to appear at the Yavneh favissa and Tel Qasile temple assemblages.

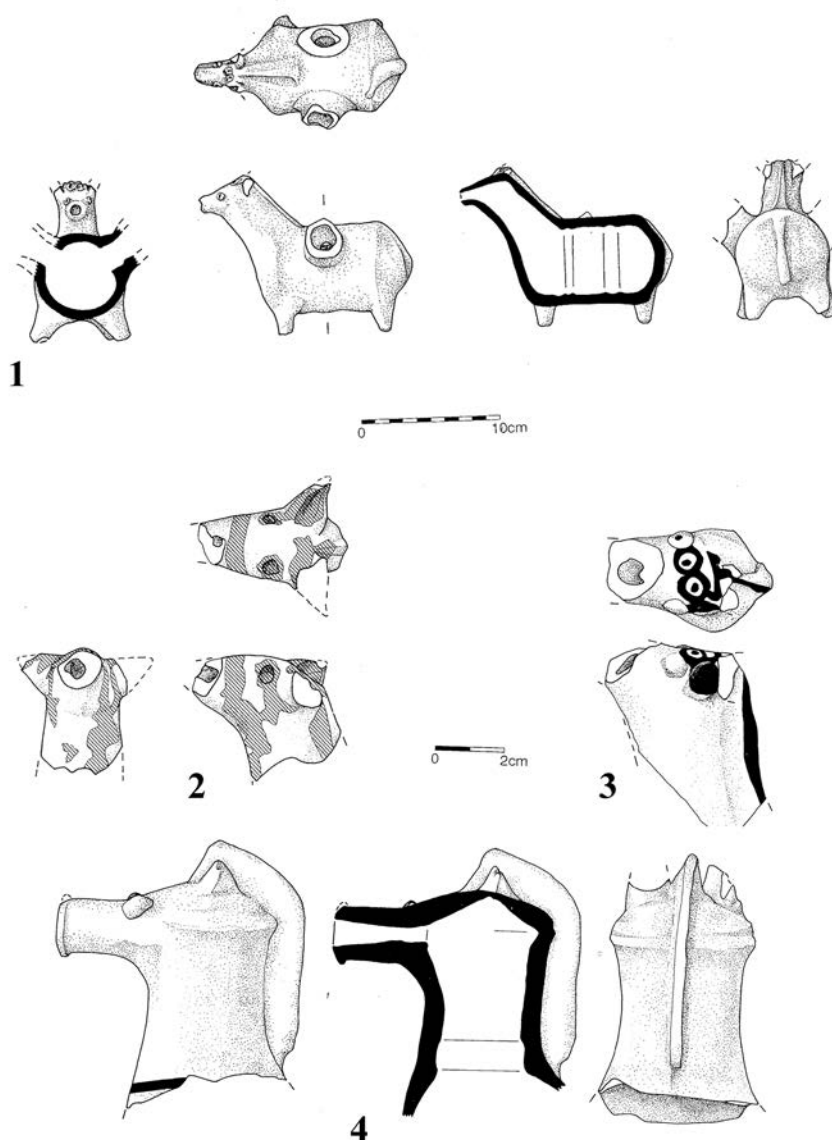


Figure 3.65. Equine libation vessels from Ekron.

An almost complete animal-shaped vessel, bearing two jars or loads (fig. 3.65:1, Ben-Shlomo 2008a: 36, fig. 9:2) was found on a Stratum VA floor, north of Building 350 in Field IV at Ekron. The animal is probably a horse or donkey, as indicated by its incised mane and vertical ears. The cylindrical wheel-made body (ca. 0.17 liter capacity) has two perforations, on which miniature vessels were attached, serving as filling spouts. Terracottas depicting beasts with burdens appear in the southern Levant from the Chalcolithic period (Epstein 1985), and seem to have become more popular during the Iron Age II.<sup>38</sup> These equine vessels probably reflect the economic importance of donkeys or mules in the Bronze and Iron Ages, and do not appear to depict a divinity or be directly related to cult places. Other head spouts from Ekron, which probably belong to equine libation vessels, include a donkey-shaped head spout (fig. 3.65:2), which has naturalistically modeled ears and a red decoration on the head that may indicate an attempt to depict a muzzle. Another equine head spout (fig. 3.65:3) has a rather unusual decoration of black dotted circles over the eyes, possibly depicting the forelock. The spout itself is hand-made and unusually shaped, similar to a head spout found at Tell Abu Hawam (Balensi 1980: pl. 105:45).

Head spouts with no horns or ears may depict equine—horse or donkey—or bird heads (fig. 3.84:1–3, 5–6; bird vessels with similarly blank, head spouts lacking details, are known from Cyprus and Greece, Desborough 1972: 255–6, nos. 49, 52). A large head spout of a horse-shaped vessel (fig. 3.65:4) was found at Ekron in a Stratum IB installation and has very prominent vertical ears and a long mane. The prominent mane was depicted by attaching a flattened, thin strip of clay to the back of the neck and top of the head. This spout belongs to a large libation vessel or kernos, and has no good parallels. Another possibly equine head spout is decorated with black stripes on the neck and muzzle (fig. 3.84:5).

Equine or horse figurines may be identified by the mane, long neck and unhorned, vertical ears. A nearly complete figurine from Ekron (fig. 3.66:1) is very delicately modeled with a long curving neck and a cylindrical elongated body. There is a pierced ridge on the lower nape, depicting the mane, which probably served for hanging; this may have been an amulet hung on a string. Altogether, a group of four figurine bodies have a pierced back that was possibly used for hanging (see above, fig. 3.61:4–6).

<sup>38</sup> Examples can be found at Tell Beit Mirsim (Albright 1943: pl. 27:e), Beth-Shemesh (Grant 1929: 167, fig. 196: 503), Gezer (Macalister 1912: pls. 125:18, 126:7,20), Hazor (Yadin et al. 1961: pl. 277:3–4), Lachish (Tuffnel 1953: pls. 30:23, 27, 29–30), Tell Abu el-Kharaz (Fischer 2001: fig. 9) and in the Dayan collection (Ornan 1986: 57, no. 22). See Gershuny 1991 for more examples and discussion. Many of these vessels come from tombs, e.g., at Beth-Shemesh and Lachish. Zoomorphic vessels portraying laden animals also appear in Cyprus and the Aegean, especially during the Geometric Period (see Guggisberg 1996: 220–23, the *Pferde A1* type). These vessels are most likely a result of Levantine influence or inspiration, which increased during the 11<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

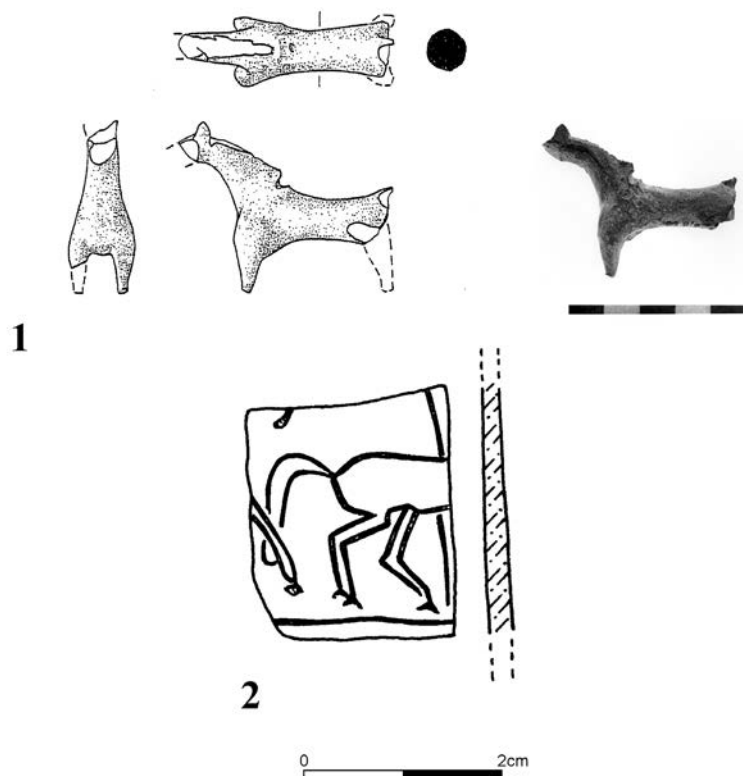


Figure 3.66. A horse figurine and an ivory inlay from Ekron.

A fragment of a bone or ivory inlay from Ekron includes a depiction of two horses (fig. 3.66:2; Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 6:5). The decoration preserved shows the rear part of a horse with two back legs and an uplifting thick tail; the leg of another horse can be seen behind it. The horses are rather schematically designed (which is not surprising, due to the small size of the image). There are no similar depictions on inlays known from Israel, but a similar scene is depicted on a silver bowl provenanced to Golgoi/Athienou, Cyprus (D. Wicke, personal communication). This was probably part of a larger scene.

One of the stands from Yavneh has a depiction of two riders (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 27, no. 2006-1043); the details of the hollowed animal heads were not preserved, but they were possibly horses.

A unique depiction of a horse on a Philistine pottery vessel comes from a domestic context at Tel Qasile (Maisler [Mazar] 1950–1951:205, pl. 34C). The vessel is a globular amphora decorated in LPDW style. The vessel has a uniform burnished (vertically on the neck) red slip that is quite similar to the LPDW style; the painted decoration includes black and white bands with

a depiction of a galloping horse in white. The horse is rather naturalistic in its design, although very angular around the edges, creating a more schematic impression. The horse decoration was seemingly made with a cut frame, partly overlapping the bands.

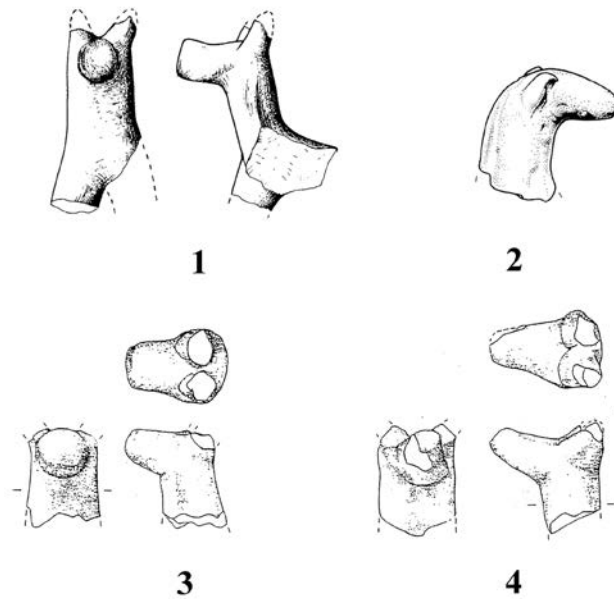


Figure 3.67. Late Iron Age horse figurines from Ashdod, Ashkelon (MC46086, Press 2007: fig. 11:5; courtesy of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon) and Ekron.

The typical Iron Age IIB–C horse or ‘horse and rider’ figurines (fig. 3.67; see, e.g., Petrie 1928: pls. 37–9; Holland 1995: 183, type D.I.a and Gilbert-Peretz 1996: type B.2C–B.2C1 29, pl. 6.13–14; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 392–4, figs. 333–6), are very common in Judah, but are quite rare in the Philistine cities. Two typical examples come from Ekron (fig. 3.67:3–4; obj. nos. 6068, 6891). These schematic depictions of horses usually have cylindrical heads, no facial details other than two vertical schematic ears, high legs and flat bodies, with or without riders. These are very common during the Iron II and the Persian periods, especially abundant in Judean sites (see Holland 1995). Another typical example with a cylindrical head comes from Ashdod (fig. 3.67:1). Interestingly, over 70 of the 150 Iron Age IIB figurines from the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC levels at Ashkelon are horse figurines, including horse and rider (fig. 3.67:2; Press 2007: 112–39, 252–60, figs. 11–12, 13:1–3, cat. nos. 76–157). This is exceptional for Philistia as very few such horse figurines were found in Ashdod and Ekron (thus far none have been found at Gath either, A. Maeir, personal communication); a similar phenomenon may

be seen in the assemblage from Tell Jemmeh (Petrie 1928). It should be noted that the heads of the Ashkelon horses are pointed and curved (fig. 3.67:2), different from the Judean figurines which have cylindrical straight heads with no details (also fig. 3.67:1,3–4, from Ashdod and Ekron). This may indicate that these figurines were only produced in the region of Ashkelon and reflect a regional variant of this type (Press 2007: 252–60; a petrographic provenance study may be of use in this case).

### 3.2.3. *The lion*

The lion appears as often as the bull on objects from Iron Age Philistia, yet when it does it is associated with more elaborate, large, rare objects, such as on the cultic stands from Yavneh, and the head cups, which also appear in the temples at Tel Qasile and Nahal Patish. This probably indicates the importance of this animal (which is clearly not a domestic, common animal) in the symbolic and religious world of Iron Age Philistia. No Aegean-style lion depictions can be identified (except the probable lion, appearing on the decorated pyxis lid from Ekron described above, fig. 3.54). Otherwise, the lion depiction can be classified as ‘Canaanite’, even though some of the vessels depicting lions carry Philistine Bichrome decoration (see below).

#### 3.2.3.1. *Ceramic head cups*<sup>39</sup>

These are vessels, probably used as large cups, that have a lower part or base formed in a shape of an animal’s head (figs. 3.68–3.71; Ben-Shlomo 2008a: 34, fig. 8). Zoomorphic head-shaped cups with Philistine Bichrome decoration have been found in association with Iron Age I Philistine, ‘Sea Peoples’ and other sites, such as at Dor (Stern 2006: 387, fig. 1:a), Tell Jerishe, Megiddo, Tel Qasile (fig. 3.68:1), Tell es-Safi (figs. 3.70–3.71; Maeir 2006) and Tel Zeror (see Mazar 1980: 101–3; Dothan 1982: 229–34; Zevulun 1987). Zoomorphic head cups and head rhyta appear in various media—stone, gold, silver and ceramic—in the Mycenaean and Minoan world (Marinatos and Hirmer 1960: pl. 175; Marinatos 1972: pl. 4:1; Koehl 1981; 1990), with the examples from Israel strongly associated with the Philistines, as indicated by their decorative style and geographic distribution (Dothan 1982: 229–34; Stern 2006: 388).<sup>40</sup> Yet, head cups depicting lion heads are known from Late

<sup>39</sup> Although sometimes termed ‘rhyta’ (Dothan 1982: 229) these vessels are usually not libation vessels as they have only one opening.

<sup>40</sup> Zoomorphic head cups are depicted in Late Bronze Age Near Eastern iconography as precious objects, included in diplomatic gifts. These vessels are made of precious metals, stone or ivory, and the clay examples may have been cheaper imitations. Most of these depictions appear in tomb paintings of New Kingdom officials (see Kantor 1947: 47, pl. 9; Wachsmann 1987: 56–64, pls. 36:a–b, 37:a, 38, 41). Other depictions appear on a Late Bronze Age ivory from Megiddo (Loud 1939: pl. 4:2b).

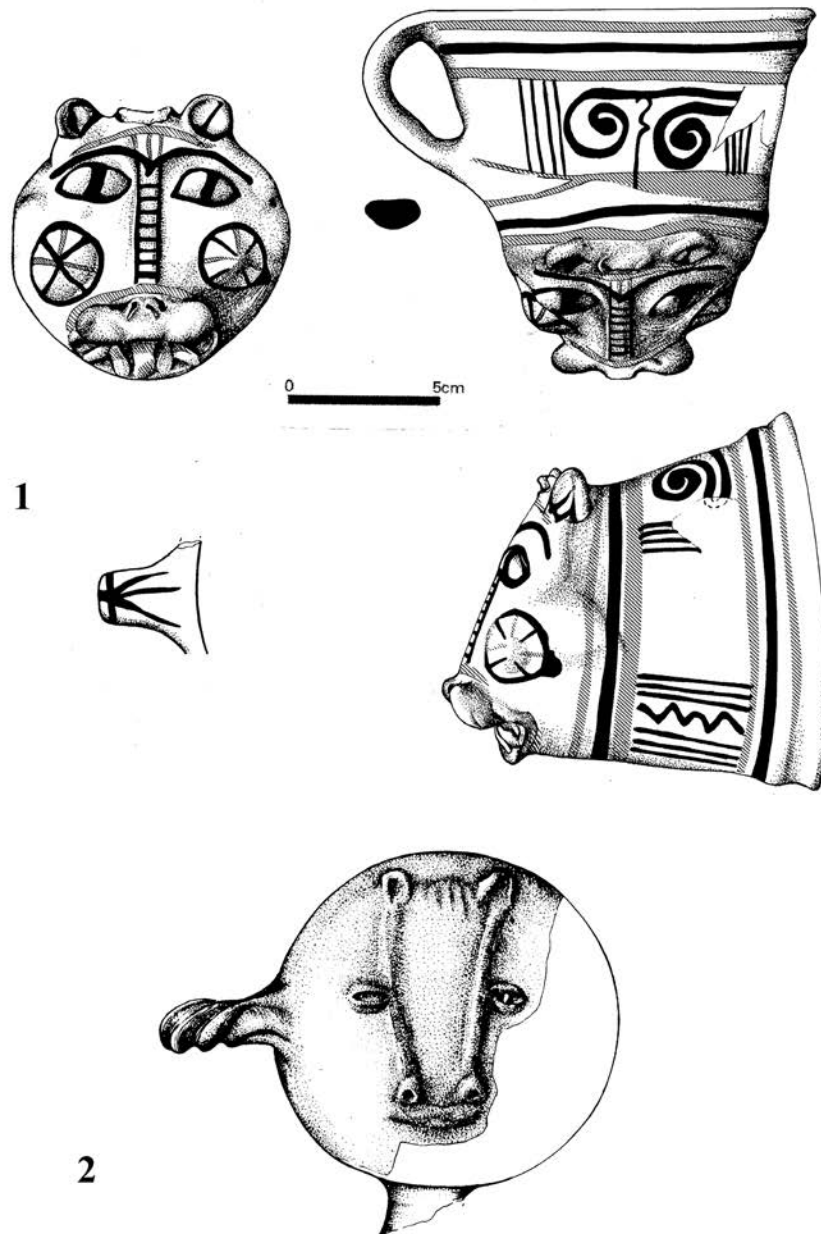


Figure 3.68. Lion head cup and trick vase from Tel Qasile  
(after Mazar 1980: figs. 34, 36).



Bronze Age Ugarit (e.g., Schaeffer 1978: figs. 3–4; Yon et al. 1987: 343–9, Zevulun 1987) and elsewhere, and are essentially a Levantine form.<sup>41</sup> As these head cups have been treated extensively by T. Dothan (1982: 229–34) and others (e.g., Mazar 1980: 96–100; Maeir 2006), they will not be discussed here in great detail. The Tel Qasile example is the most complete (fig. 3.68:1); the mouth is emphasized, depicted open with the large fangs and drooping tongue; the ears are small and circular. The eyes, cheeks and snout are modeled in clay, but emphasized by the decoration, using outlining, circles and ladders, which can be rather imaginative (as the filled circles on the cheeks). The body of the cup is decorated by typical Philistine Bichrome motifs (spirals, triglyphs). The fragmentary example from Tell Jerishe (Dothan 1982: pl. 16) has a similar depiction of the mouth and cheek (T. Dothan's 'Group 2'). The examples from Gath (figs. 3.70–3.71; Dothan 1982: fig. 7, pl. 15) have a closed mouth, with no teeth and tongue (T. Dothan's 'Group 1'; also those from Zeror and Nahal Patish).

The recent example found in a late Iron Age I level at Gath is decorated in red and black (fig. 3.70, Maeir 2006). While the decoration on the cheeks and eyes seem to emphasize the facial details, the netted decoration on the nose is purely imaginative and unrealistic. The painted depiction of the nose is similar to a zoomorphic head cup fragment from Tel Qasile (Mazar 1980: fig. 35) and to the depiction on a trick vase from Tel Qasile (fig. 3.68:2; Mazar 1980: fig. 36). The object from Gath was probably intentionally broken around the edges of the face, in order to possibly preserve the face after the complete vessel went out of use (Maeir 2006: 339).

Three additional zoomorphic head cup fragments were found at Ekron (fig. 3.69; Ben-Shlomo 2008a: 34, fig. 8) and they seem to illustrate different styles of Philistine decorated ware. The hand-made face of an unidentified animal was found on a Stratum V floor in the vicinity of a possibly cultic room in Field INE (fig. 3.69:1; Dothan and Dothan 1992: 242, pl. 20; Dothan and Gitin 1994: cover page; Dothan 2003a: 208, fig. 17). The eyes are unusual, composed of two large disks; the dark brown and red decoration emphasizes the eyes with concentric circles, and includes bichrome geometric patterns. The animal is unidentified and seems imaginary, while the decoration is in the Philistine Bichrome tradition. Another modeled animal face comes from a mixed Iron Age context (fig. 3.69:2). With only part of the face preserved, a definite identification of the depicted animal is not possible,

<sup>41</sup> Two lion head cups were found at Ugarit, one with a dedicatory inscription to the god *Reshef*. The inscribed cup, as Yadin (1985) has shown, is important, as it demonstrates the cultic significance of these vessels and also mentions a specific animal—the lion—and the god *Reshef*. The vessel is a depiction of a lion's face, as mentioned in the inscription—*pn arw*. Yadin associates these vessels with a widespread Canaanite cult related to the gods *Nergal* and *Reshef* and the latter's consort, 'Anat, all associated with lions (Yadin 1985: 265–7). These vessels are also considered by Zevulun (1987) to be in the Syrian tradition, showing continuity throughout the second millennium BCE.

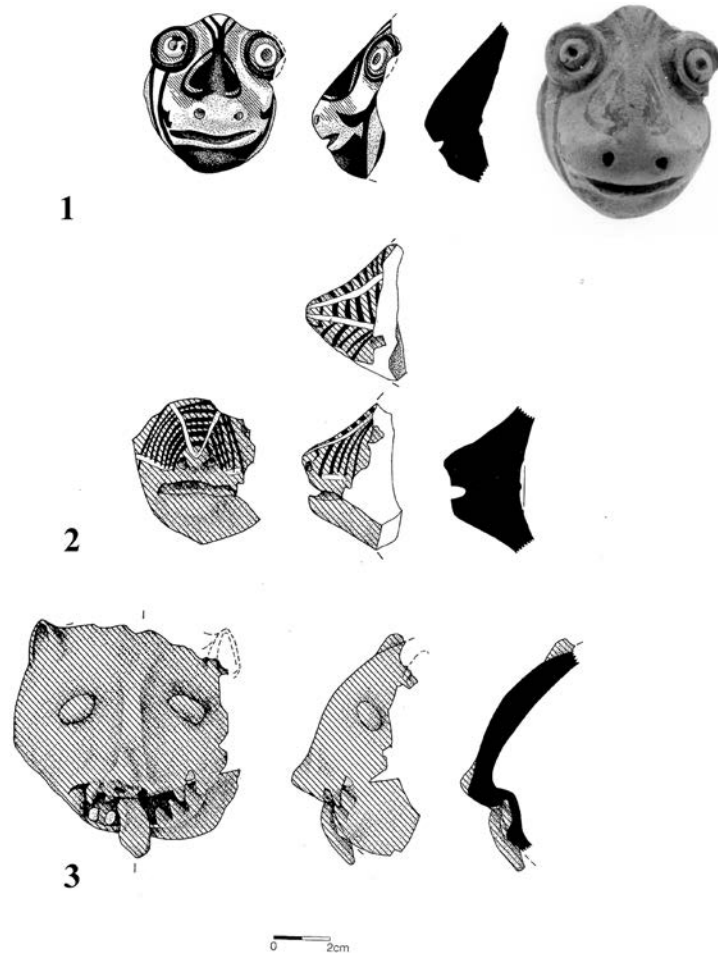


Figure 3.69. Lion head cups from Ekron  
(Ben-Shlomo 2008a: fig. 8).

although it may be a lion, bull, or another animal. The object may have been intentionally broken around the edges of the face, just as the example from Gath. It is red-slipped and decorated with black and white geometric motifs, linking it to the LPDW style of the Iron Age IIA. Somewhat similar objects were found at Gezer (Macalister 1912: fig. 125:21) and Megiddo (May 1935: pl. 37:M1468), probably also dating to the Iron Age IIA. A hand-made feline face (fig. 3.69:3) was found in the Stratum IB destruction debris in Temple Auxiliary Building 652 Room a. The entire object is red-slipped and hand-burnished. The animal depicted is probably a lion or another species of large cat. The modeling of the mouth and tongue is very similar to the head cup from Tel Qasile and Tell Jerishe (fig. 3.68:1; Mazar 1980: figs. 34–5).

Recently, another complete intact lion head cup was uncovered at the site of Nahal Patish in south west Philistia, i.e. the northern Negev (Nahshoni 2009). The site contained a temple structure, yet the cup was found in the adjacent building (see also section 4.4). The cup, decorated in the Philistine Bichrome style with red and black paint over white slip, is depicted with a closed mouth, making it more similar in its depiction to the cup from Tel Zeror (T. Dothan's Group 1, Dothan 1982: 229, pl. 13). It is naturalistic, with small ears, eyes, snout (with scattered dots representing the whiskers above the mouth), nostrils and a wide mouth. The decorative motifs are similar to the example from Megiddo (Dothan 1982: pl. 14). They include chevron patterns on the forehead, snout and cheeks, checkerboards on the front neck, and parallel lines on the sides of the neck and handle.

Maeir suggested that due to the lack of a depiction of the mane, the lion headed cups represent female lionesses and are related to the major female Philistine goddess (Maeir 2006: 340–41). It should be noted however, that the lack of mane on the depiction of the head cups may not necessarily indicate these are female, as modern Asian male lions have smaller manes, which might not be distinctive from a frontal view. Moreover, the association of goddesses with male *or* female lions is also known from the Canaanite tradition and iconography, for example the goddesses of 'Anat and Hathor (Yadin 1985: 265–7; Keel 1992: 204–9, nos. 204–21; Cornelius 2004: 45–8). It is apparent that these objects do not cease to appear during the Iron Age II (contra Maeir 2006: 342) as two examples from Ekron (fig. 3.69:2–3) were found in Iron Age II context, and, more importantly they show Iron Age II stylistic characteristics (as the burnished red slip, similar to LPDW). In any

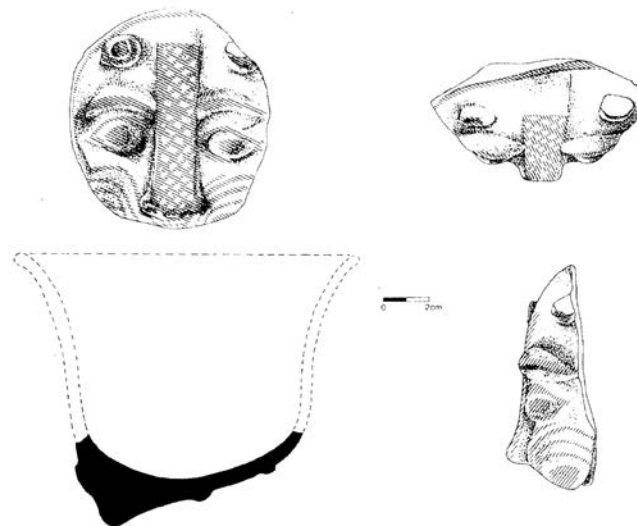


Figure 3.70. A lion head cup from Gath (after Maeir 2006: fig. 4).

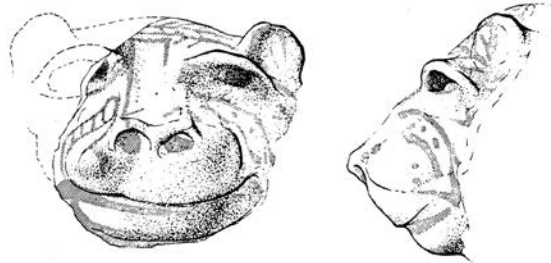


Figure 3.71. A lion head cup from Gath (after Dothan 1982: fig. 7).

case, it is quite clear that the zoomorphic/lion head cups, which are rare objects in general, are more popular in Philistia. They are more likely to indicate a certain adaptation of a Canaanite tradition, yet with Philistine influence (as the Philistine decoration indicates). Its appearance in the Tel Qasile and Nahal Patish shrines and at Ugarit (with the dedicatory inscription), as well as on the stands from Yavneh (see below), clearly indicates its religious significance, particularly in Philistine cult (see section 4.4).

A unique 'trick vase' from Tel Qasile (fig. 3.68:2; Mazar 1980: 103–4, fig. 36) has a depiction of an animal face, possibly a lion, on its base. The modeling of the face is quite similar to that of the zoomorphic head cups from Philistia; therefore, this object may carry a similar symbolism as the lion head cups (and is rather similar in its function too).

### 3.2.3.2. *Lions in the Yavneh assemblage*

Following bulls, lions are probably the second most common animal depicted in the Yavneh stands (e.g., fig. 3.72). They are possibly more important according to the fashion in which they appear, as seven of the stands are supported by lions (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 18–19; see parallels and discussion of the Jerusalem and Ta'anach stands, Beck 1994; Beck 2000: 170–73). In four of the stands, the objects do not have side walls and are completely supported by the two lions depicted on the bottom (fig. 3.72; Ziffer and Kletter 2007: nos. 2006-992, 2006-992, 2006-1025, 2006-1042). In another stand, a female is shown mounted on a lion (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: no. 2006-1046). Generally, the lions are quite schematically depicted, with emphasis placed on the gaping jaws with fangs and drooping tongue (as fig. 3.72); the lack of mane is again interpreted to indicate lionesses (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 18). In one case, two large and more naturalistically depicted lions are represented with incised manes (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: no. 2006-1021). It should be noted that in at least one case (no. 2006-1042), the lion's snout is vertically cut as in the depiction of some of the bulls (see above, fig. 3.63). The motif of supporting lions is an important decorative and architectural theme in the ancient Near East throughout the second and first millennia BCE (see Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 19, and references therein).



Figure 3.72. A cultic stand with lions from Yavneh (no. 2006-992; photograph: Leonid Padrul).

### 3.2.3.3. Statue

A large and heavy (620 gram) lion/lioness head from Ashdod was found in the passageway of the six-chambered gate of Area Stratum VIII (fig. 3.73; Dothan and Porath 1982: 32–3, fig. 18:2, pl. 18:1). The item is solidly ceramic, and its shape, pierced ears and large size indicate that this was not a ‘head cup’, but possibly part of a large statue (although it is partially hollow). The decoration of red paint over white slip emphasizing the ears and whiskers recalls Philistine Bichrome decoration. This item may have originated in an Iron Age IIA stratum (Dothan and Porath 1982: 33), and was probably of cultic use. It adds to the sizable assemblage of late Philistine lion depictions, especially evident in the assemblage from Yavneh and the earlier head cups. A crouching lion is also depicted on a stone seal from Ashdod (see above, fig. 3.22:2), which is quite unusual for a seal.

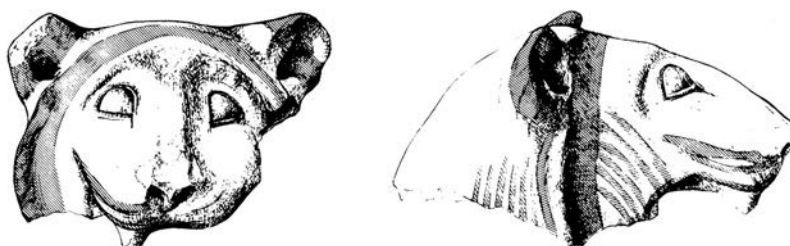


Figure 3.73. A lion statue from Ashdod (after Dothan and Porath 1982: fig. 18:2).

### 3.2.4. *The Bird*

Of all figurative representations, the bird motif may possibly be the sole or at least the most distinct motif that is indeed typical of the Philistines. This is especially due to the fashion in which it appears and in its appearance on various materials (figs. 3.74–3.80). Particularly notable is its frequent and rather standardized appearance on decorated Iron Age I Philistine pottery. Other Aegean and Canaanite forms of bird representations are also found in Iron Age Philistia; especially important is their possible appearance on cultic bowls in the Tel Qasile temple.

#### 3.2.4.1. *Aegean style*

*Decoration on pottery.* In T. Dothan words, which still hold true: “The bird with an outspread wing and turned back head is clearly one of the hallmarks of Philistine ceramic decoration.” (Dothan 1982: 198). The bird motif (figs. 3.74–3.75) appears already in the Philistine Monochrome ware (fig. 3.74:1–2,4–6; Dothan and Zukerman 2004: 39–40, figs. 8:14, 19:1, 35:8), but is more common on Philistine Bichrome ware (figs. 3.74:3, 3.75; Dothan 1982: 198–203, figs. 61–2). Although birds appear on Late Bronze Age decorated pottery in the Levant (e.g., Benson 1961; Epstein 1966: 31–40), the Philistine bird is clearly inspired by Mycenaean and Minoan birds (Dothan 1982: 200; Yasur-Landau 2008), yet, it is also depicted in a typical ‘Philistine’ style (Benson 1961; Yasur-Landau 2008: 216–8). The Philistine birds, appearing on Philistine Monochrome and Bichrome alike, are either depicted with their beak facing forwards (figs. 3.74:1, 3.75:2,4) or backwards (figs. 3.74:2–6, 3.75:1,3,5), a posture of the bird tending its feathers; this posture has almost become a ‘trademark’ of the Philistines. The birds appear in various compositions, especially on kraters and jugs (e.g., Dothan and Porath 1993: figs. 21–2, 27–9), often alongside a large checkerboard motif (figs. 3.74:5, 3.75:2–3); on large kraters they at times appear as a symmetrical motif on both sides (as in examples from Gezer, see, Dothan 1982: figs. 6–7). In an example from Ashdod, two birds stand on top of each other (fig. 3.75:1, Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: fig. 3.47:9), while in several cases they are depicted as following one another (e.g., fig. 75:4). The shoulder of a jug from Tell ‘Eitun, on the western foothills of Judah, is decorated with alternating pairs of birds facing backward and fish (fig. 3.75:5). The combination of birds and fish is well known in Mycenaean, Cypriote and Philistine iconography (e.g., Dothan 1982: 203–4; Stager and Mountjoy 2007; Yasur-Landau 2008, and more references therein). The two themes probably interconnect in a marine-like scene.

The details of the Philistine birds are in most cases rather standardized (especially when compared to Aegean depictions, see Yasur-Landau 2008: 216). Their details include the elongated neck, rounded small head with a dotted eye and uplifting beak. The wing is usually depicted by three or more



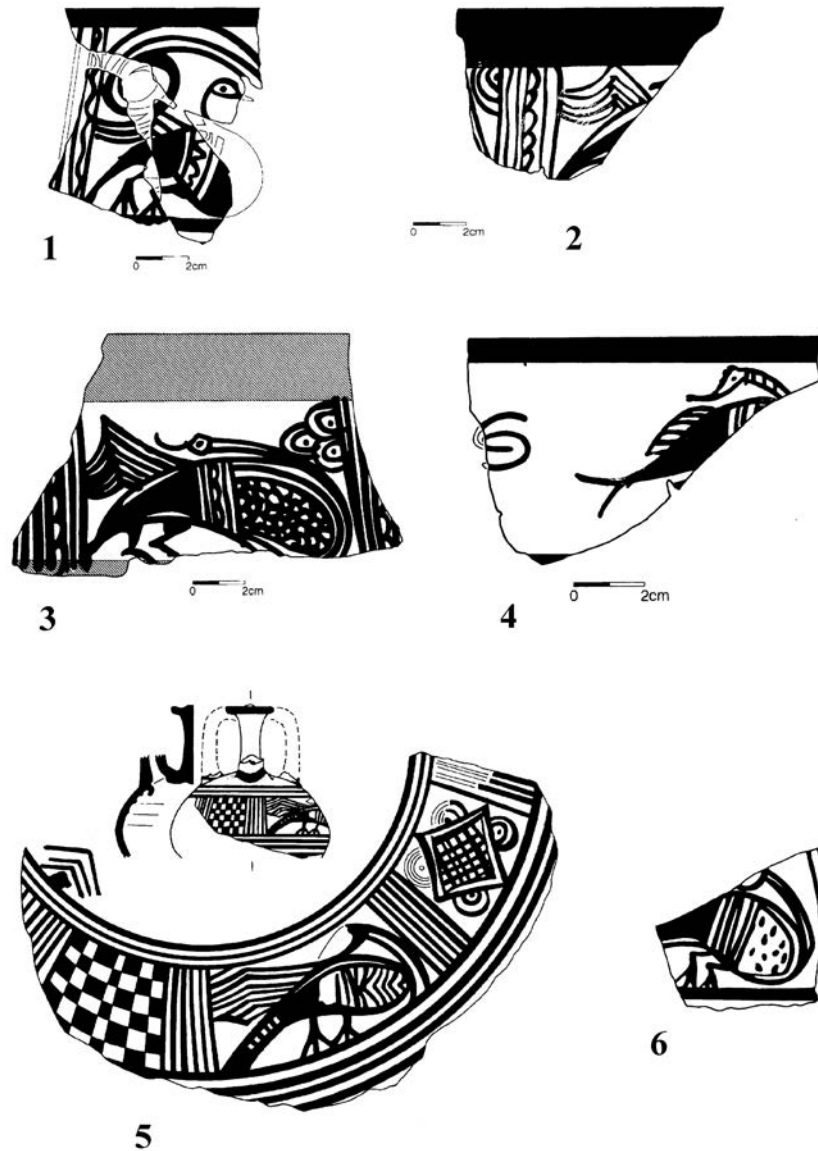


Figure 3.74. Birds on Philistine pottery.

parallel bent lines, with the tail pointing down from an oval or leaf-shaped body. The two short legs usually have three toes. The filling of the body is clearly a component which relates to Philistine development, and is usually non naturalistic in nature. It consists of either straight and wavy lines (e.g., figs. 3.74:1, 3.75:1), straight vertical lines in the middle of a red or

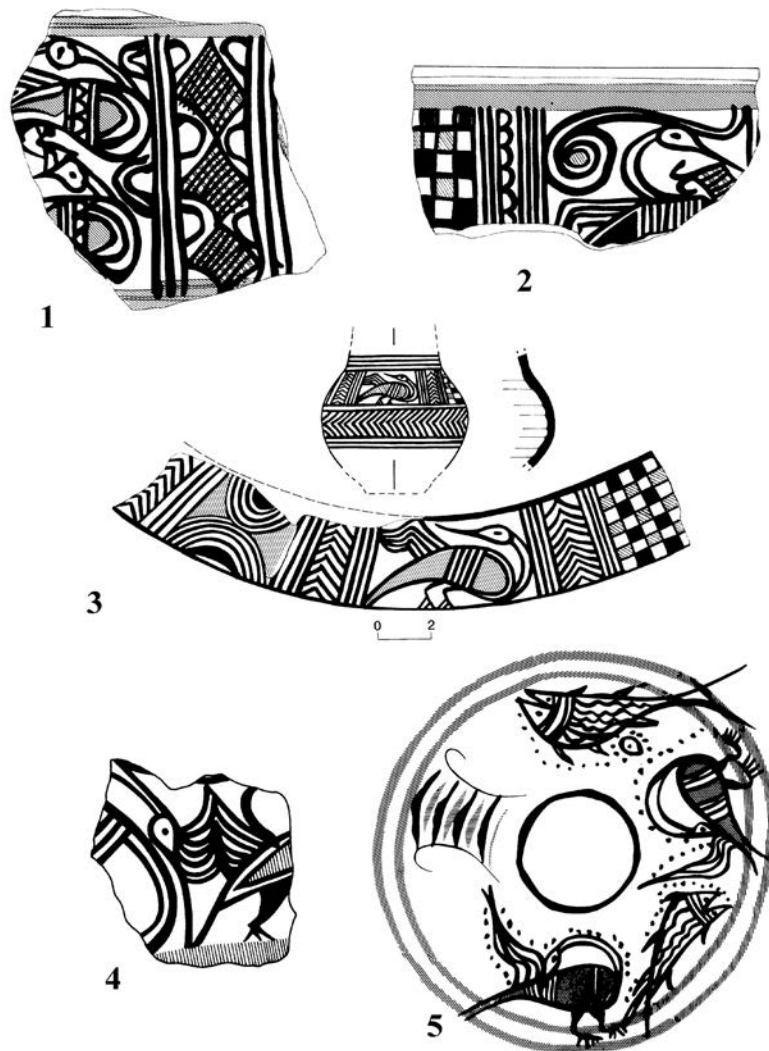


Figure 3.75. Birds on Philistine pottery.

black fill (fig. 3.75:3,5), or more rarely of a bent chevron design (fig. 3.74:5), 'scales' (fig. 3.84:3), dots (fig. 3.74:6) or other patterns (Dothan 1982: 199; Philistine Monochrome examples seem to be more varied). The bird depicted as standing on longer legs in the krater from Ashkelon (fig. 3.12, above) is clearly exceptional (as is the entire scene on the krater). Dothan also notes a group of poorly, carelessly drawn Philistine birds (1982: 199), yet these seem to be the minority in Philistine pentapolis sites. Rare examples of Philistine birds appearing on Iron Age IIA LPDW pottery from Gath also

occur (A. Maeir, personal communication). In fact, the characteristics of the painted Philistine birds are largely a local stylistic development and thus, it is most likely that these details cannot be used to identify the geographic 'homeland' of the Philistines within the Aegean (as suggested, for example, in Dothan 1982: 203).

*Terracottas.* Birds appear on other Aegean-style objects in Philistia as well. Two bird askoi (fig. 3.76; Ben-Shlomo 2008a: 25, fig. 1:2) were identified at Ekron, together with locally made Philistine Monochrome pottery. These objects can be identified as bird-shaped askoi on the basis of parallels from Cyprus and the Aegean (Furumark 1941: 68, shape 194). The depiction of the animal is highly schematic and only expressed in the shape of the body, and possibly legs. A complete, intact example (fig. 3.76:1) was found on a Stratum VIB floor of Building 357, near a rectangular hearth (Dothan

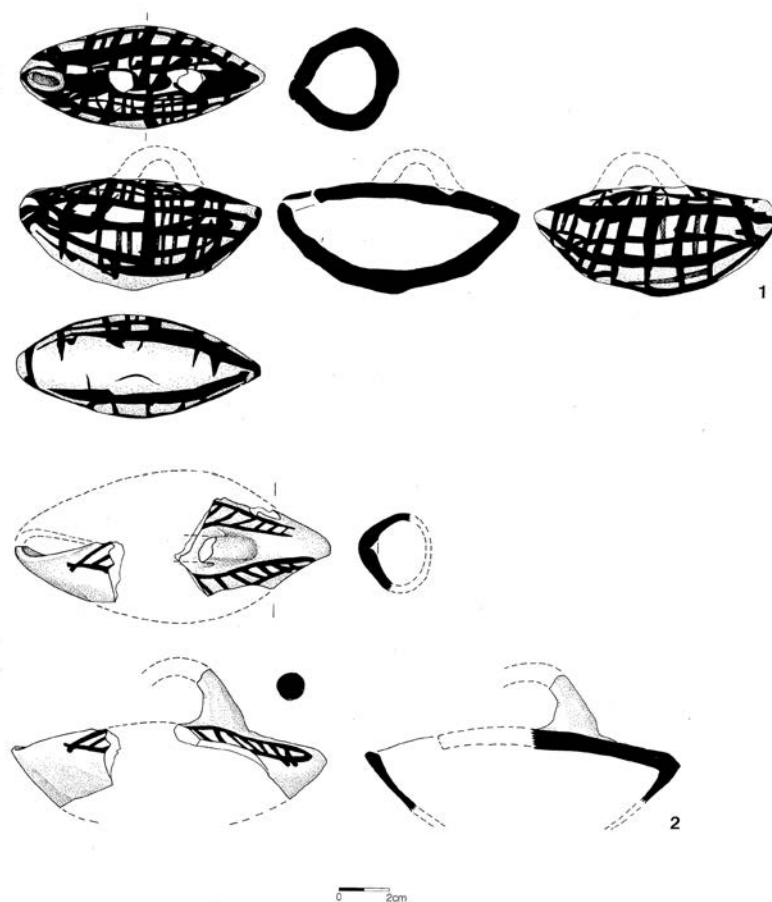


Figure 3.76. Bird askoi from Ekron.

2003a: 208, fig. 4). The monochrome decoration is a net pattern, covering the entire vessel except for its lower part. A fragmentary example (fig. 3.76:2) is made of light-colored, well-levigated clay. The vessel was created by folding a wheel-made slab or shallow bowl into an ovoid body, which was then joined to the upper part of the vessel, where a handle was attached. Thus, one end has a small trefoil opening, while the other is closed and pointed. The brown, monochrome decoration consists of a closed 'ladder' pattern on both sides. A similar Mycenaean IIIC:1b bird askos comes from Maa-Palaeokastro, Floor II (Karageorghis and Demas 1988: 119, pls. 60:544, 183:544).<sup>42</sup>

As Yasur-Landau has shown, the bird is an important Aegean symbol that is possibly connected with the seated goddess (Yasur-Landau 2008: 216–18, see below section 4.2). In addition, studies have shown the link between birds and ships in LH IIIC and possibly Philistine iconography (Wachsmann 1998: 177–98; 2000; Yasur-Landau 2008). Birds appear on bows of ships depicted in LH IIIC pottery (e.g., Yasur-Landau 2008: fig. 3:1,2,4), and sometimes the bow itself is depicted as a bird's head (Wachsmann [1998: 177–97] linked this with the form of the bird on ceramic and other bowls, and to the navigational value of the bird for the Sea peoples' seamen). Note, however, that the depiction of birds in relation to ships on Mycenaean pottery can represent artistic conventions rather than actual reality (Petrakis 2004; see also López-Bertran, Garcia-Ventura and Krueger 2008 on the symbolic and cultic aspects of Phoenician and other ship representations in the eastern Mediterranean).

#### 3.2.4.2. *Philistine and hybrid style*

Philistine and hybrid-style depictions of birds include terracottas that are not made in Aegean or Mycenaean-style form, but are only decorated in the Philistine Bichrome style. Bird shaped-vessels or rattles appear in several cases in Philistia and are usually decorated in the Philistine Bichrome style (fig. 3.77:1–3). One example from Ekron (fig. 3.77:2; Ben-Shlomo 2008a: 28, fig. 4) has a hand-made body, with an applied horizontal wreath depicting a wing. The typical Bichrome decoration consists of white slip with alternating black and reddish-brown lines. A bird-shaped rattle decorated in white slip and black and red decoration was found in Building 5337 at Ashdod, Stratum XII (fig. 3.77:1; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 120, fig. 3.36:1), while two other bird rattles were also found at the site (Dothan and Freedman 1967: fig. 46:4; Dothan and Porath 1982: fig. 6:4). Other Philistine bird vessels were found at Gezer (fig. 3.77:3; Macalister 1912: figs. 389, 390:1; Dothan 1982: 219–7), as well as on kernoi from various sites (see Mazar

<sup>42</sup> Similar Mycenaean vessels also come from Ialysos (Maiuri 1926: figs. 60, 65), Mycenae and Tiryns (Guggisberg 1996: 41, nos. 95–7, 148, pl. 6:7–8), and Sub-Minoan Kavousi in Crete (Guggisberg: nos. 461–6, pl. 36:1–4). Cypriot and Aegean bird vases from the Iron Age are discussed by Pieridou (1970, e.g., pl. XIII:1) and Desborough (1972). Particularly similar to the askoi from Ekron are Desborough's vessels 27 (from Kourion), 55 and 56.

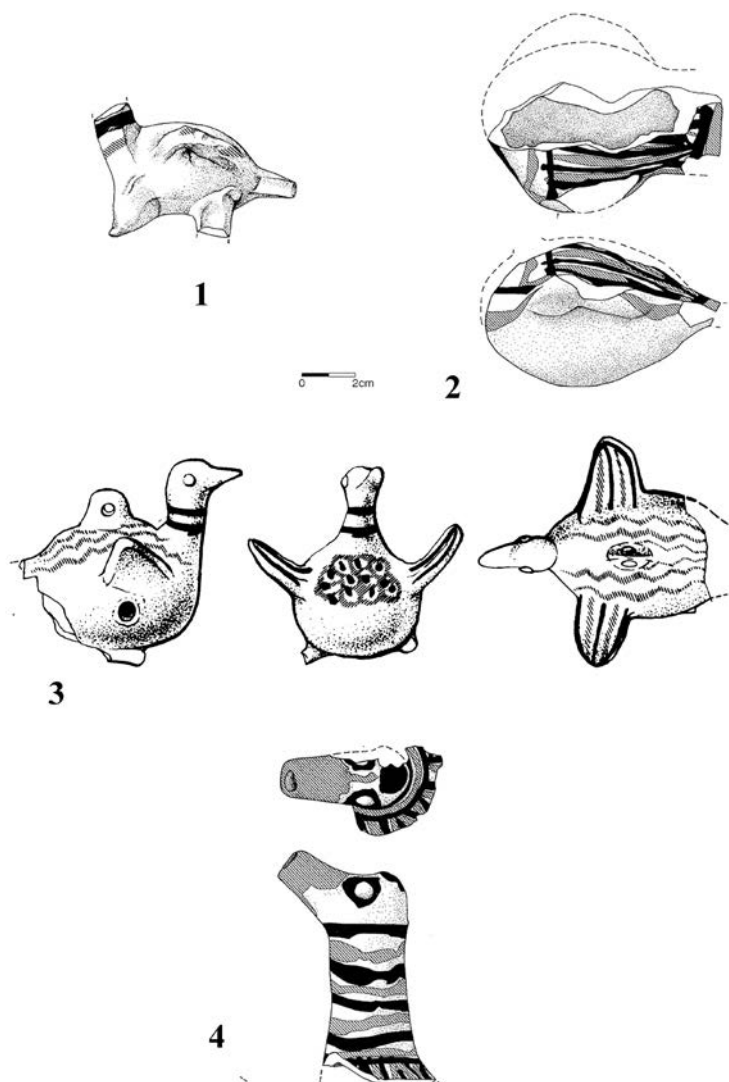


Figure 3.77. Philistine Bichrome bird vessels and rattles from Ashdod, Ekron and Gezer.

1980, see fig. 3.89:5), including the cultic corner at Gath (A. Maeir, personal communication).<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Other body fragments of zoomorphic vessels with a chalky white slip and Bichrome decoration were also found at Ekron, some in Late Iron Age contexts; the bodies were either hand- or wheel-made (obj. nos. 5687, 7341, 7514, 9641, 11441).

Bird-shaped vessel fragments decorated in the Philistine Bichrome style from Ekron also include an unhorned head spout, with a very long hand-made neck (fig. 3.77:4; Ben-Shlomo 2008a: 28, fig. 3). It has an unusual protrusion applied to the forehead, and a black and reddish-brown decoration consisting of alternating colored stripes along the neck and at its base, over a white slip. The snout and eyes are also painted. This unusual head spout may depict a horse, with the forehead protrusion representing the mane. A more plausible possibility however, is that it depicts a bird, similar to bird vessels from Cyprus (e.g., Pieridou 1970: pl. 16:2) and Tell Abu Hawam ('Anati 1959: 95, fig. 5). A similar head spout, albeit red-slipped, was found at Tel Batash, Stratum IV (Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2001: 210, pl. 8:1, photo 141). A similarly long-necked head spout found at Buseirah was even identified as a camel ('Amr 1980: 217, fig. 176).

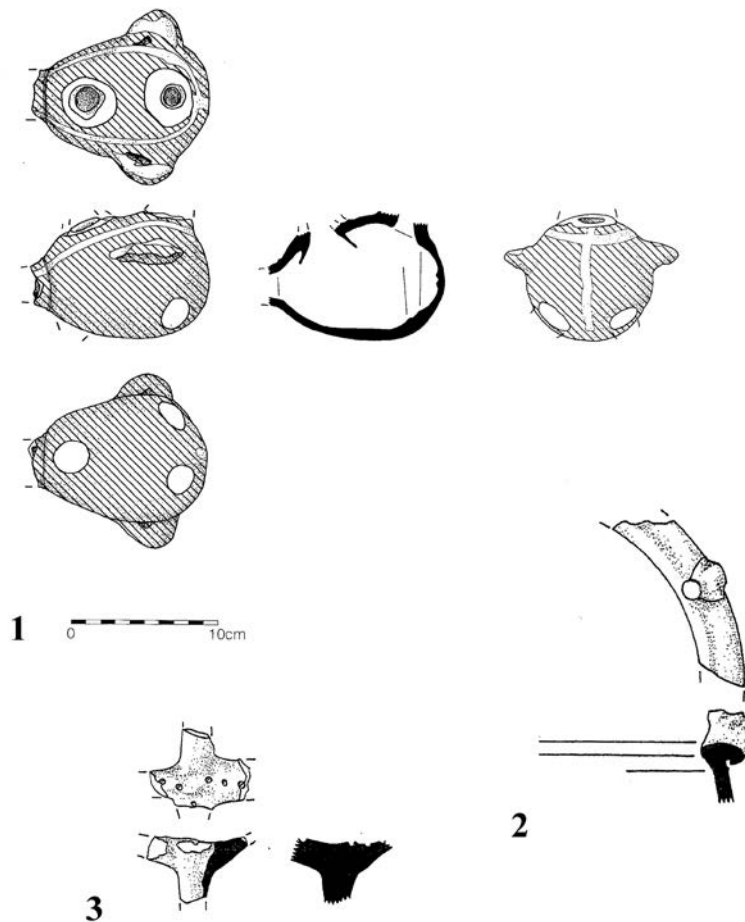


Figure 3.78. Bird shaped vessels and figurines from Ekron.



Another bird-shaped vessel from Iron Age II Ekron should be included in the LPDW stylistic group (fig. 3.78:1; Ben-Shlomo 2008a: 30, fig. 5:2), though found in a later, Iron Age IIC context (a Stratum IB destruction debris). Its wheel-made body (capacity ca. 0.35 liter) has traces of the pouring spout at the head and filling spout in the rear; two small wreaths, applied on the sides, depict the wings and there are traces of three broken legs at the base. The decoration consists of red slip with white bands around the front opening and along the upper part of the body. Parallels for this vessel come from a late Iron Age tomb at Lachish (Tufnell 1953: pl. 30:25) and from Tell Jemmeh (Petrie 1928: pl. 15:4). A similar unslipped vessel was found at Ashdod, Area D (Dothan 1971: 132, fig. 72:2). The style of decoration classifies this vessel as Late Philistine ware, with most parallels coming from Philistia.

#### 3.2.4.3. *Canaanite style*

*Bird-bowls* (fig. 3.79). These are open bowls with bird heads, wings and tails attached to their rims or sometimes to the surface of the inner bowl; these bowls were placed on stands, as bird-bowls found in situ in Temple 300 at Tel Qasile demonstrate (fig. 3.79:1; Mazar 1980: 27–8, pls. 14–15). A group of four bird heads and one tail from Ekron are probably fragments of bird-bowls (fig. 3.79:2–3,5). The bird heads, depicting swans or ducks, have applied eyes and curved necks (fig. 3.79:4). One of the heads has a pointed, delicate beak, which has soot marks (fig. 3.79:3), although it is possible that this head came from a bird figurine. Another head has a more rounded neck (fig. 3.79:2). Generally, the bird heads from Ekron are somewhat smaller and more delicate than those of the complete bowls found in the temple at Tel Qasile (fig. 3.79:1; Mazar 1980: pls. 33–4). Some of the heads are decorated by red stripes (fig. 3.79:4 from Ashdod). One tail of a bird bowl or vessel (fig. 3.79:5) is made from fine light colored clay and has brown stripes on both sides. Bird-bowls from Ekron and elsewhere are limited to the Late Bronze Age II and Iron Age I (Mazar 1980: 96–100), but are not restricted to Philistia. Examples come from Ashdod (e.g., Dothan and Freedman 1967: figs. 35:1–2, 47:2; Dothan 1971: fig. 92:1–3, 5, *inter alia*), Megiddo (Loud 1948: pl. 85:7), Enkomi (Courtois 1984: figs. 19–20, 25) and Gath (Bliss and Macalister 1902: pl. 47; also, recently, on a chalice, A. Maeir, personal communication). Bird-bowl heads found at Tel Dan are possibly associated with Iron Age I metallurgy (Biran 1992: 143, fig. 118). These vessels seem to be Egyptian-inspired vessels, as attested to by similar finds from Egypt and the Late Bronze Age temples of Beth-Shean (James and McGovern 1993: 97–8, 171–2). Bird-bowls and similar duck-shaped ivory or wooden cosmetic boxes appear in Philistia (see below, fig. 3.80), as well as in 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty Egypt and its sphere of influence. Several bird-bowls were found at Deir el-Medineh (Nagel 1938: figs. 141–4), Gurob (Brunton and Engelbach 1927: pl. 21:45), and Sedmet (Petrie and Brunton 1924: pl. 54:23).

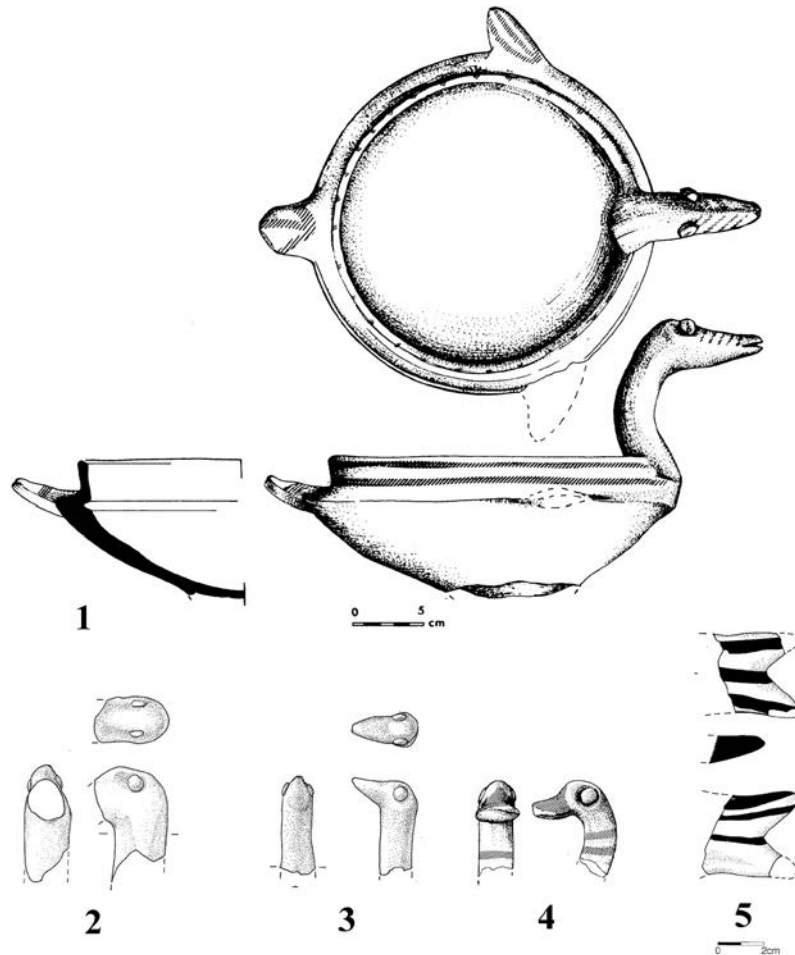


Figure 3.79. Bird bowls from Tel Qasile, Ekron and Ashdod.

A small group of fragments of a different style can be identified as bird figurines. A small bird figurine from Ekron (fig. 3.78:3) seems to depict a bird on a pillar with outstretched wings; the figurine is decorated with six punctures on the back (possibly depicting feathers) and red burnished slip. Similar bird figurines were found in the Ramesses II temple at Beth Shan (Rowe 1940: pls. 20:7–9, 64A:1).<sup>44</sup> Another example is a small bird figurine attached to

<sup>44</sup> Several other examples include: Nahariyah, MBII, Ben-Dor 1950: pl. 11:21–22, 25–26, pl. XII:10–12; Tell Beit Mirsim, Iron Age, Albright 1943: fig. 32.3; Tell Jemmeh, Iron Age, Petrie 1928: pl. 39:1; Jerusalem, Iron Age II, Holland 1995: 186, fig. 8:8–12; Gilbert-Peretz 1996: fig. 15:4–10.

the rim of a large krater from Iron Age II Ekron (fig. 3.78:2); it is possible that there were more birds (or other figures) attached to the entire perimeter of this rim. Two fragments of incised *Tridacna* shells were found at Ekron and are dated to the late 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE (Brandl 2001). One fragment is interpreted as depicting a falcon's head, while the other, part of a bird's tail; these decorated shells may have been produced at a production center in the region of the Red Sea (Brandl 2001: 60).

*Ivory cosmetic bird-shaped boxes.* Several examples of bird- or duck-shaped cosmetic boxes made of ivory were found at Ekron, Ashkelon and Tel Qasile (fig. 3.80; Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: 18, fig. 12), and reflect a continued Late Bronze Age tradition. One of the examples is the lower part of such a box with three holes on the rim and two in the center, and remains of a tail inserted in the rear (fig. 3.80:3; Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: 18, fig. 12:3). The wings were inserted on the sides, possibly with two pegs each, one to the rim and one to the bowl, while the perforations on the lower body could have been used to attach the box to another object (or, possibly, to the hands of a swimming girl, as in a cosmetic spoon: see, e.g., Fischer 2007: pl. 107). A lower part of an ivory cosmetic bird-shaped bowl was also found at Tel Qasile (Mazar 1985b: 10–12, table 1, fig. 3:1, photo 6). Two ivory duck heads belonging to cosmetic boxes of the same type were also found at Ekron (fig. 3.80:1–2): one has a perforation and was attached with a peg (fig. 3.80:2), while the other has a protrusion for insertion into the box (fig. 3.80:1). The latter is very naturalistic, with head feathers, mouth, eyes and nostrils carefully depicted through engraving. Such an ivory duck head was also found at Philistine Ashkelon (Stager 2004; Stager, Schloen and Master 2008: fig. 15.17). Similar bird heads, with an identical depiction of the plume, were found at Megiddo Stratum VIIA (Loud 1939: 18, pl. 45:206–209, forward facing; see also Beth Shan, Level VI, James 1966: fig. 101:24).

Pottery and stone bowls and boxes with heads, wings and tails of birds also appear in Egypt and the Levant (for example, at Tel Qasile and Ekron).<sup>45</sup> Although there are Egyptian roots to the open vessels and boxes in the shapes of birds, these ivory boxes are actually much more common in the southern Levant than in Egypt (see Adler 1996: 74–5, figs. 21–2; Lilyquist 1998: 27; especially the boxes with the duck facing back). Generally, the bird-shaped ivory boxes seem to have a long life span in the Near East, appearing from

<sup>45</sup> A detailed discussion is also given in the Kamid el-Loz reports (Adler 1996, see also Liebowitz 1987:14, Fischer 2007). Several similar examples come from Beth Shemesh, Stratum IV (Grant and Wright 1938: pl. 52:1), Megiddo, Stratum VIIA (Loud 1939: pls. 30:157, 31), Dan, the Mycenaean tomb (Biran and Ben-Dov 2002: 141–2, figs. 2.100, 2.101:205, two examples, one with perforations on the lower part), and Enkomi among other sites (see Adler 1996 for references). Earlier examples from the Late Bronze Age include sites as far as the Mitanni palace at Tell Brak (Oates 1987: 191, pl. 42:a–b).

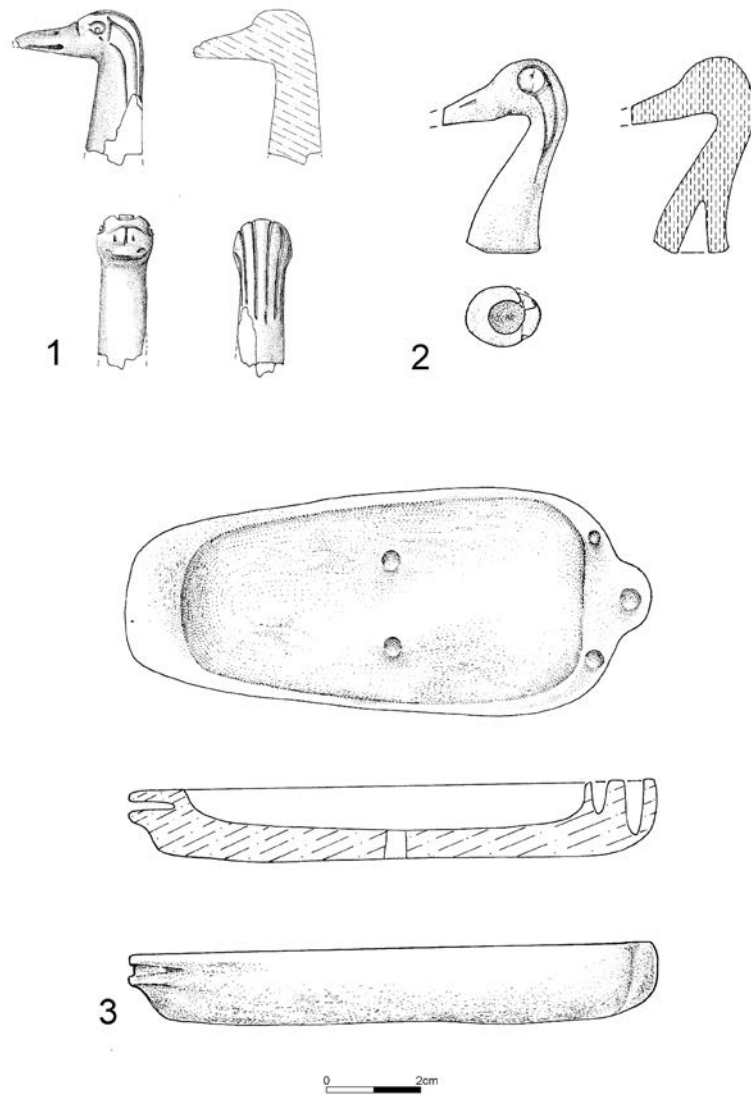


Figure 3.80. Ivory bird-shaped cosmetic boxes from Ekron  
(Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 12).

the early Late Bronze Age (as the Kamid el-Loz and Tell Brak examples – Adler 1996) until at least the end of the second millennium BCE (as in the Tel Qasile and Ekron examples), and can be seen as a Levantine style artifact. The theme of the backward-facing bird is common in Philistine pottery decoration, and thus, it is not surprising that the Philistines gladly adopted this type of object.

### 3.2.5. Hedgehog

A complete hedgehog vessel of Philistine Monochrome ware was found on the Stratum VIIA floor of a room near the massive city wall in Field X at Ekron (fig. 3.81; Dothan 1998a: 23–5, pls. 4:1, 10a; Dothan 2003a: 207, fig. 16; Ben-Shlomo 2008a: 25, fig. 1:1). Visual examination and CT scanning (N. Applbaum, personal communication) show that it was hand-made by folding a round, flat slab of clay. The vessel's only aperture is through the short pointed head, which apparently prevented its effective use as a libation vessel. Over the head, an applied ridge depicts the hedgehog's 'crown' or corona. The other pointed end is the tail, while the four legs were applied to the belly. The monochrome reddish-brown decoration in a net pattern extends over the entire back, delimited by two horizontal lines on either side. This pattern probably depicts the hedgehog's spikes. On the top of the back, there is an area where the paint was rubbed off, which may indicate the location where another object or vessel was attached.

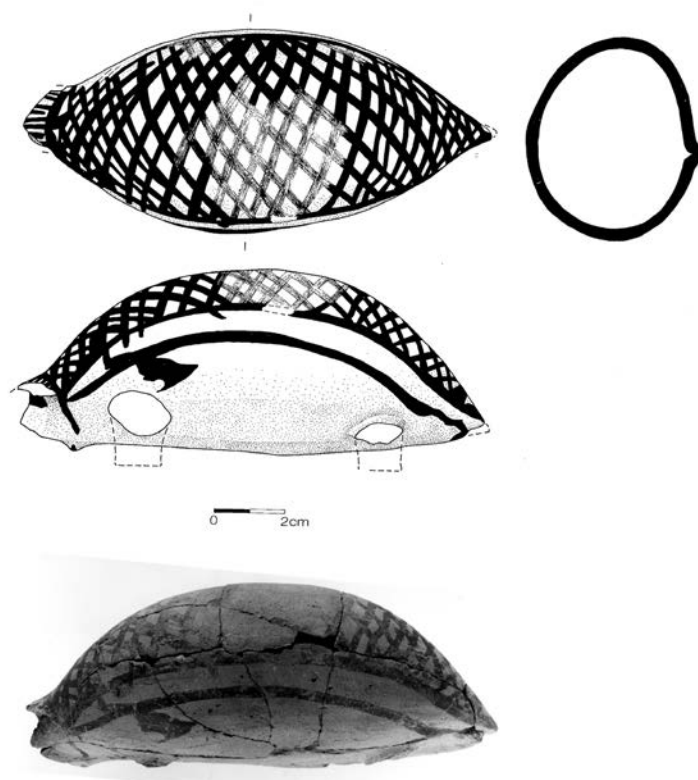


Figure 3.81. Philistine Monochrome hedgehog vessel from Ekron (after Dothan 1998a: pl. 4:1; photo is courtesy of IAA).

Late Helladic IIIA–B hedgehog vessels are well-known (see Rystedt 1987; Buchholz 1995; Guggisberg 1996: 237–41, 310–11, 348),<sup>46</sup> they are mostly wheel-made from a folded slab (Glanzman 1987; Guggisberg 1996: 7–15, 369, fig. 7), and all have filling spouts on their backs and attached handles. The vessel from Ekron is different, being hand-made and having no filling spout or handle, with a less elaborate decoration. It seems that the maker of this vessel was acquainted with Mycenaean hedgehog vessels, but created an imitation that was not accurate. Note also that there are no known LH IIIC hedgehog vessels from the Aegean or Cyprus, while LH IIIB hedgehog vessels are well known and have been extensively discussed.<sup>47</sup> Six of the known vessels come from Ras Shamra-Ugarit and the nearby cemetery at Minet el-Beida. It cannot be ruled out that some of these vessels were made in the Levant, or manufactured in the Aegean for export to the Levant, similar to the Late Bronze Age Mycenaean ‘chariot kraters.’ The single vessel from Ekron is probably the only known LH IIIC example. In ancient Egypt and the Levant, the hedgehog symbolized fertility and regeneration, perhaps due to its ‘chthonic’ nature or its winter hibernation, which could also explain its funerary contexts, mainly at Minet el-Beida and on Cyprus.<sup>48</sup> The context at Ekron is not completely clear, as it may have come from a small sanctuary, or from a domestic area. Thus, the hedgehog vessel could either be cultic or primarily valued as a prestige item.

### 3.2.6. *The ibex/ram and other quadruped animals*

Ibexes, rams and the caprine species in general, appear on several occasions in the iconographic depictions of Philistia. While it is sometimes difficult to identify the species, heads with backward curving horns can usually be identified as ibexes or goats. These appear in terracottas, glyptics and ivory (figs. 3.82–3.83). Its importance as a Canaanite motif is well-known (see

<sup>46</sup> Note also Mycenaean IIIA hedgehog vessel from Shiqmona (Elgavish 1994: fig. 12), and probable fragments from Tell Abu Hawam (Balensi 1980: fig. 39:5–7), Tel Sera (Leonard 1994: 95), and Lachish (Leonard 2000: 310), as well as an example from Akko (E. Marcus personal communication).

<sup>47</sup> Schaeffer 1949: figs. 58:a, 4, pl. XXXVII, 1978: 323–4, figs. 42:46, 43:1–2, 4. Another vessel comes from the Late Bronze Age sanctuary of Kamid el-Loz (Hachmann 1983: 70, fig. 33), and two examples come from Cyprus: Mirtu Pighades (Karageorghis 1965: 225, fig. 25:2) and Maroni (Johnson 1980: figs. 20, 63). Three come from the Aegean, and the remaining vessels are of unknown provenance (Buchholz 1995).

<sup>48</sup> The hedgehog is an insect-eating mammal of great symbolic significance in many cultures, as reflected in terracottas and iconography (Rystedt 1987; Buchholz 1995). Its ability to consume poisonous creatures, such as snakes and scorpions, may have created an illusion that it had antitoxin powers. Leonard (2000: 314) suggests that the defensive qualities of the hedgehog could explain its depictions as vessels in tombs and as warrior helmets on Mycenaean vases. According to Guggisberg (1996: 374), the symbolism of regeneration may have been transferred to the Aegean as well.



below), and is further attested to by its appearance on the Yavneh cultic stands.

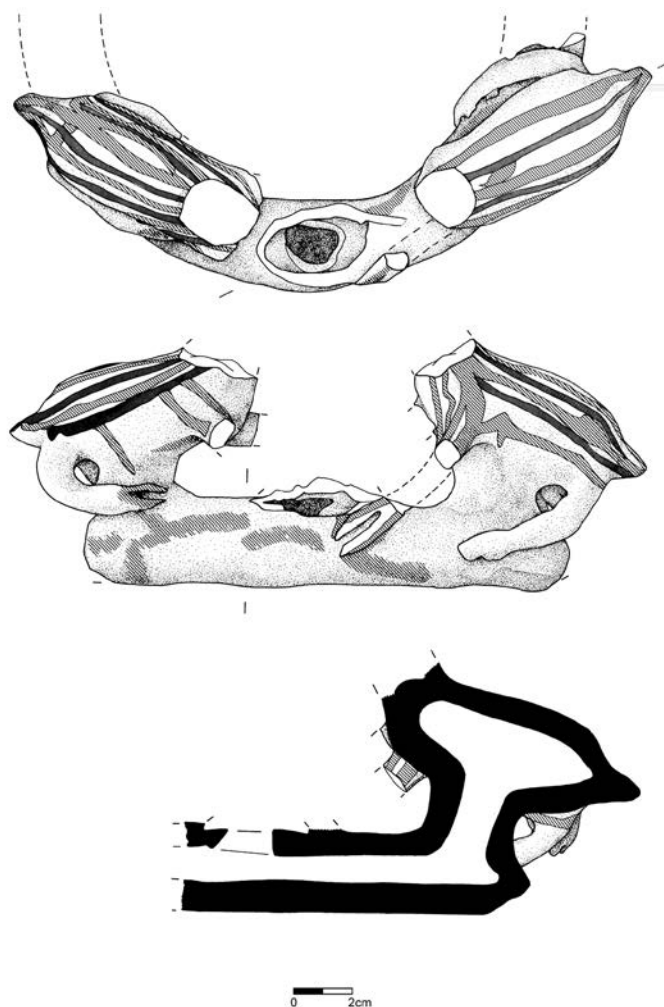


Figure 3.82. A kernos from Ekron (Ben-Shlomo 2008a: fig. 10).

A ring kernos from Room a of Building 350 at Ekron (fig. 3.82; Ben-Shlomo 2008a: 36–9, fig. 10) was part of an assemblage or cache (Gitin and Dothan 1987: 204–5, Dothan 1998b; Dothan and Dothan 1992: pl. 32) and probably depicts two ibexes. This kernos has two hollow, non-spouted animals, standing in a heraldic position on either side of a ring hole representing the location of another attachment that was not preserved, perhaps a vessel from which the animals are drinking. One of the animals is female, with its udder applied on the stomach. Despite the missing heads, the shape of the body

and udder suggest that these animals are probably ibexes or rams; especially indicative would be the pointed hind, typical of caprines. The kernos has a white wash and two shades of reddish-brown decoration. A kernos fragment from Tell es-Safi (Bignasca 2000: pl. 11:O109; Avissar 2004: 54) may be the only known parallel. The composition of two animals drinking from a vessel between them appears on a kernos from Megiddo (May 1935: pl. XIV).<sup>49</sup>

If the missing object from the Ekron kernos (fig. 3.82), located in between the animals, was a tree or some sort of alternative motif, this would be a classical depiction of the important and religiously significant Canaanite and Near Eastern motif of the two ibexes flanking the tree (e.g., Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 56–8, 72–4; Ornan 2005: 153–9; Yasur-Landau 2008: 224). Such a rare depiction, in the heart of a Philistine site (in a public building) with both sexes vividly indicated, could be especially interesting.

In general, kernoi are hollow clay rings with various spouts and attached vessels.<sup>50</sup> The exact function of kernoi is as yet unclear, but it may have been cultic. Some may have been used as lamps, while others served as libation vessels.<sup>51</sup> Ring kernoi should be seen in principle as a Canaanite vessel type that also appears in earlier periods (Mazar 1980: 109–11; Bignasca 2000; Ben-Shlomo 2008a), yet, it is especially popular in Iron Age Philistia. Other kernos fragments were found at Ekron, mostly from Iron Age I contexts (Ben-Shlomo 1999: type C), as well as at other sites (see overview in Mazar 1980: 109–11; Bignasca 2000: 104–32). Another kernos, with a bird, bovine head and pomegranate vessel on it, was found in a late 9<sup>th</sup> century cultic corner at Gath (A. Maeir, personal communication). Their appearance in vast quantities during the 8<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE in Areas D and H of Ashdod (e.g., Dothan and Freedman 1967: figs. 44:1, 45:1, 5–7; Dothan 1971: fig. 71; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: fig. 3.86) reflects a continuity of material culture in Philistia throughout the Iron Age. As noted above, these latter examples are often decorated in red slip and black and white paint and should be classified as LPDW style vessels (Ben-Shlomo, Shai and

<sup>49</sup> Another possibility is that the missing object between the animals was a tree. The Canaanite motif of two animals, usually goats or ibexes, flanking a sacred tree, is well known during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages (see, e.g., Beck 1982: 13–16, fig. 4).

<sup>50</sup> The manufacturing technique of kernoi involves creating a tubular ring by folding the edges of a shallow bowl or clay sheet thrown on a wheel. In ring kernoi, the inner part is then cut and smoothed, while in kernos bowls, it is left as is. The spouts are either hand- or wheel-made and are applied to apertures pierced in the ring.

<sup>51</sup> The kernos from Rosh Zayit, for example, has soot marks on its cup (Gal and Alexandre 2000: 82). Kernoi were generally interpreted as cultic libation vessels used for wine or other liquids (May 1935: 17–18), although at Beth-Shean it was noted that during the Late Bronze Age, this vessel had a more domestic nature (James and McGovern 1993: 179). Bignasca (2000: 250–54) interpreted kernoi as cultic vessels used for libation or mixing liquids, then imbibed through the spouts, while symbolically he linked them to cosmological entities such as the primordial ocean. This interpretation, in my opinion, is not corroborated by any textual or archaeological evidence, and is very doubtful.

Maeir 2004: 12, fig. 3:10). However, the themes appearing on the kernoï, such as the ibexes, bulls, birds, and pomegranates, seem to substantiate their Canaanite character.

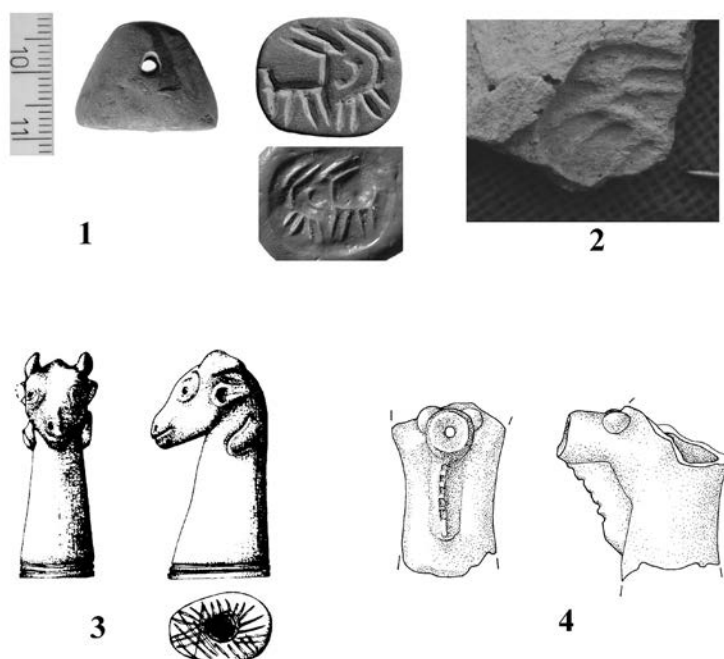


Figure 3.83. Depictions of ibexes/rams from Ekron and Ashdod.

A complete conical limestone stamp seal from Ekron (fig. 3.83:1; Ben-Shlomo 2006c: 142–3, fig. 13) has two ibexes depicted in linear style on its base; they are similar to each other, though the right one has a tail; a symbol (possibly of a half moon) appears between the animals. A fragment of a clay sealing (fig. 3.83:2) from another context has an almost identical impression showing such ibexes. The motif may have had religious meaning, as the moon could be a divine symbol. This entire composition is very rare. Yet, somewhat similar conical seals come from the Philistine tomb at ‘Eitun (Edelstein and Auran 1992: 29, fig. 14:2), Gezer (Macalister 1912: fig. 437:6) and Akko (Keel 1997: 630, no. 282). Generally, ibexes are very commonly used on post-Ramesside seals, often associated with scorpions (Shuval 1990: 105–10, nos. 60–61, 64–9). An ibex probably appears on a scaraboid from Ashdod, Stratum VIIIb as well (Dothan 1971: fig. 44:19). Another ibex, goat or ram is depicted on a complete ivory handle from Ashdod, Area M (fig. 3.83:3; Dothan and Porath 1982: fig. 25:2). This handle, which is very naturalistic in its facial details, has somewhat similar parallels from Lachish (Tufnell, Inge and Harding. 1940: pl. 17:12–14). As the item and its style seem to belong

more to the realm of Late Bronze Age II or Iron Age I artifacts, rather than to the Iron Age II contexts it was found in, it may be a second millennium BCE heirloom.

Ibexes are also seen on several stands from Yavneh (fig. 3.28; Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 23, nos. 2006-1033, 2006-1040, 2006-994), where they are part of the classically Canaanite composition of the caprines and palm tree (see, e.g., Yasur-Landau 2008: 224, and below). The incised and modeled animal figures on the Musician's stand (fig. 3.18, see discussion above) may also depict gazelles.

Two horned, head spouts from Ekron (fig. 3.60:5–6) have depressed temples; the arched breakage point below the neck in fig. 3.60:5 identifies it as a kernos spout. The horns were created by pinching the back of the head; a similar head spout was found at Tel Sippor (Biran and Negbi 1966: 166, pl. 22:13). It may be a depiction of a ram or goat head, similar to a head spout from Tel Batash (Mazar and Panitz-Cohen 2001: 210, pl. 8:1), although it could also depict a bull. The other head spout (fig. 3.60:6) is hand-made and red-slipped, and the head is pressed with two fingers at the temples, creating depressions on both sides. A similarly 'squashed' head spout was published from Ashdod, Area M, found on surface (Dothan and Porath 1982: fig. 34:4). An unusual head spout, found at Ekron in a Stratum IB debris layer, has a very long, serrated dewlap (fig. 3.83:4). This may be a depiction of an ibex or a goat head that was part of a zoomorphic vessel or large kernos.

A late Iron Age head spout (fig. 3.60:4) is red slipped with a white cross on the forehead, similar to the LPDW type of head spout (see fig. 3.84:1), while a white slipped unhorned spout (fig. 3.84:6) has a cross painted on the top of the snout in black and red stripes. The unhorned and un-eared head spout (fig. 3.84:1) was found on the Stratum VC floor of Room B (the 'bamah' room) in Building 350. The spout is red slipped and burnished, with a white decoration of bands on the snout and neck. Similar head spouts were found at late Iron Age Ashdod, Area D (Dothan 1971: fig. 67:4–6). A head spout from Ekron, Stratum III, is also red slipped and burnished, although it is considerably smaller and hand-made (fig. 3.84:2), while a small, unhorned head spout found in Stratum IA has no slip (fig. 3.84:3). These three last head spouts from Ekron, found in late Iron Age contexts, possibly originated in early Iron Age strata, as the style of the heads may indicate.

Other depictions of miniature animals include figurines depicting goats, dogs and unidentified animals. A complete zoomorphic figurine (fig. 3.85:1) is possibly a figurine of what may be a grazing goat, a composition rare in zoomorphic clay figurines. A somewhat similar figurine was found at 'Azeka (Bliss and Macalister 1902: pl. 69.3).<sup>52</sup> An almost complete figurine

<sup>52</sup> A similar bronze figurine was found at Forstata, Crete (Pilali-Papasteriou 1985: pl. 17:185). This theme, of a grass-eating animal, also appears in Iron Age iconography, e.g. on seals (Keel and Uehlinger 1998: fig. 200).

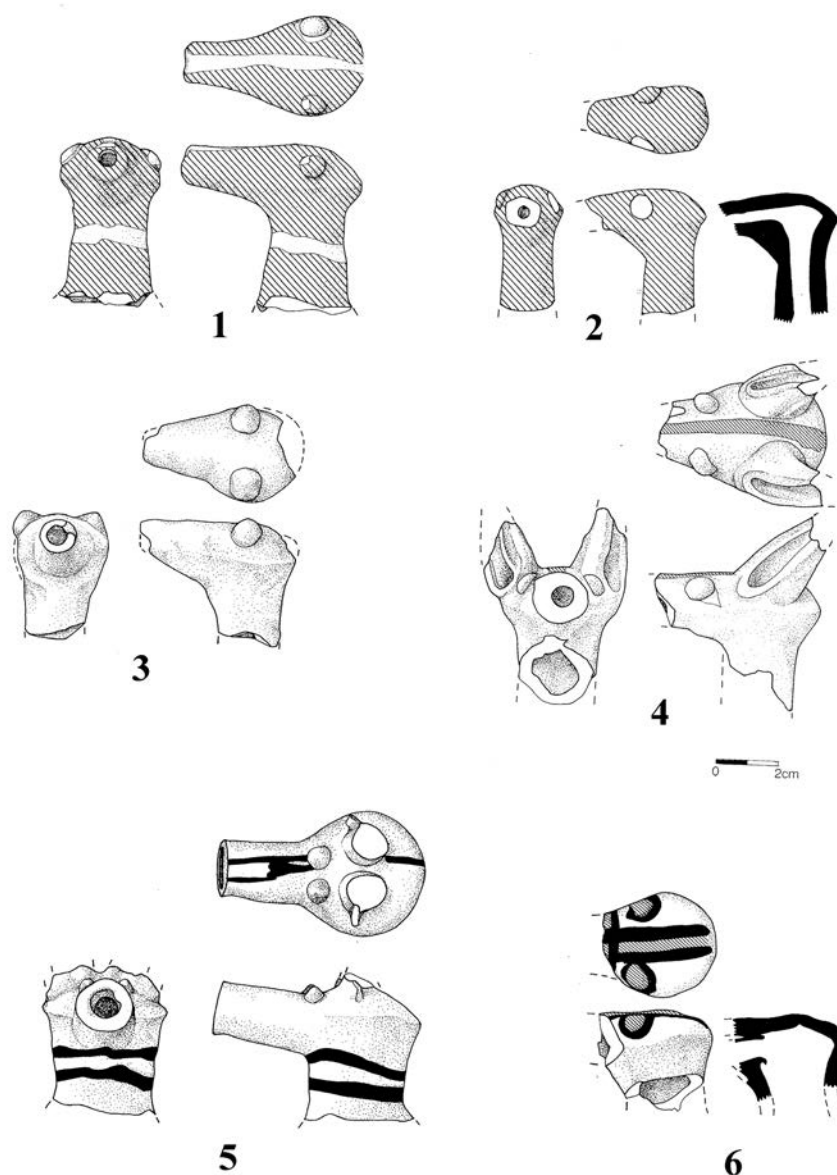


Figure 3.84. Various zoomorphic head spouts from Ekron.

(fig. 3.85:2) may be identified as a dog figurine, according to the curving tail, arched body and vertical ears. A similar figurine was found at Beth Shemesh (Grant 1929: 97). Though dog figurines are cited in connection with Iron Age sites, as well as the Mesopotamian health goddess Gula (e.g. Givon 1995: 42, fig. 16.5), this is the only positively identified dog figurine from Ekron.

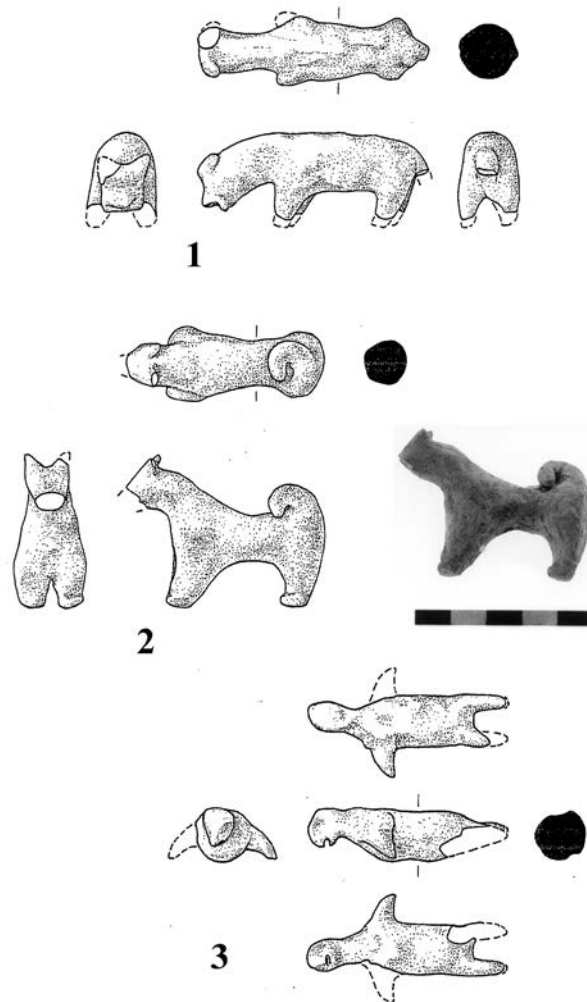


Figure 3.85. Various animal figurines from Ekron.

A white-slipped head spout found has two vertically applied, deeply grooved ears, creating the appearance of a jackal or a dog (fig. 3.84:4). A canine head spout on a kernos bowl, defined as a fox, is known from Deir 'Alla (Franken 1961: 27, fig. 5:65).<sup>53</sup> The front part of a small figurine (fig. 3.62:5) may be

<sup>53</sup> Doak and Birney (2008) suggested that a jar burial in Iron Age I Ashkelon carries an incised mark, possibly depicting a jackal, which is probably related to the Egyptian death god, Anubis; on the other side, a staff depiction is also related to Anubis. Note also the jackal depiction on an offering table from the 7<sup>th</sup> century metal cache at Ashkelon (Stager, Schloen and Master 2008: 281).



a figurine of a bovine, equine or a dog, however it is too small to be identified with any certainty. A complete, though very strange, figurine (fig. 3.85:3), has an incised bird-like mouth and long, flat-backed body, creating an impression of a lying figure. This may be a depiction of a bird, turtle or lizard, lying on its stomach, or a rather grotesque anthropomorphic figurine. Also note the limestone statue of a baboon, from Strata V and VI at Ekron (combined from obj. nos. 585+7168, basket IVNW.9.173B, locus 9014p). The upper part of the statuette, in the shape of a sitting baboon, was found in the cache in Public Building 350 (Dothan 1998b; the lower part was found in the same building in Stratum VI). It depicts an Egyptian-style baboon god and has remains of red paint (see Herrmann 1994: 579–86 for such depictions in amulets).

### 3.2.7. *Fish*

Fish depictions (fig. 3.86) are similarly derived from Mycenaean and Minoan prototypes, as birds are, but are much less common, with both Monochrome (Dothan and Zukerman 2004: 40; a new example comes from Ashkelon – Stager, Schloen and Master 2008: fig. 15.11:19) and several Philistine Bichrome examples (Dothan 1982: 203, fig. 64; Dothan, Gitin and Zukerman 2006: 86,90–91, figs. 3.28:5, 3.36:3). Generally, both the Monochrome and Bichrome depictions are not standardized. The general shape of the fish in Monochrome examples is more similar to Mycenaean depictions (fig. 3.86:1–2, including the depiction of a row of two or three fish in no. 1). The filling of the body, however, can be either a wavy line (fig. 3.86:1) or ‘herring bone’ pattern (fig. 3.86:2). Philistine Bichrome examples from Ashdod seem to be more imaginative (fig. 3.86:3–4). Especially elaborate is a depiction of two parallel fish on a sherd from Ekron (fig. 3.86:5, Dothan, Gitin and Zukerman 2006: 3.36:3), with a detailed illustration of the scales. On an elaborate jug from Tell ‘Eitun (fig. 3.75:5; Dothan 1982: fig. 29), two fish are illustrated together with two birds; the body of the fish is filled with wavy lines and their mouths are opened wide (compare to fig. 3.86:1).

The unusual fish, probably a dolphin, depicted on a krater from Ashkelon (fig. 3.12) has already been noted. A fish is also shown on a conical seal from Stratum XI at Ashdod (fig. 3.31:4, see above), as well as on a seal from an unstratified context at Gath (A. Maeir, personal communication). The fish depictions, although much rarer than the birds, may also be seen as a Philistine characteristic. They are also strongly connected to Aegean depictions of fish, both in their manner of style and figurative composition (see Dothan and Zukerman 2004: 40); it may be included in an assemblage of Aegean-style, Philistine ‘marine’ iconographic motifs (together with the birds and possibly several geometric motifs, see below).

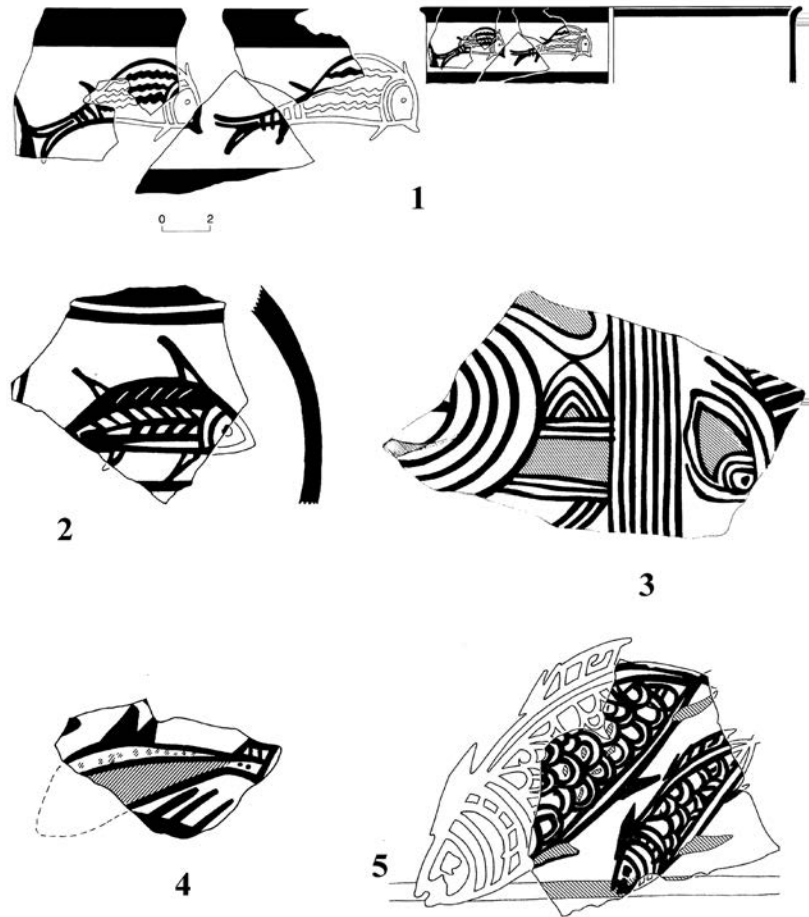


Figure 3.86. Fish depictions on Philistine pottery from Ashdod and Ekron.

### 3.2.8. Summary: animal representations

It appears that the animal representations in Iron Age Philistia are highly diversified. They occur in many forms and materials: painted pottery decoration, figurative vessels, figurines clay cultic stands, stone seals and ivories. A few of the objects can be clearly classified as Aegean-style or Philistine-style, with the most notable being several figurative vessels and the bird and fish motifs on decorated pottery. Yet the majority of the depictions, especially figurines and zoomorphic vessels, should probably be classified as 'Canaanite' or 'local' style according to their form (despite a painted Philistine decoration which often covers them). Often, the animal depictions carry very few details, or are very schematic and minimal, and thus can be quite similar in

different periods and cultures (e.g., examples from the Neolithic, Garfinkel 1995; or the Early Bronze Age, Miroschedji 1988: pls. 26:1–13, 46:3–13; Hauser 2007). Egyptian influence also appears, but to a lesser extent than on the human depictions. There are, however, special characteristics of the types appearing in Philistia (such as the late Iron Age bovine vessels) that may indicate a local development of regional style for this type of object. The meaning and significance of these animal representations, whether related to religious or more secular symbolisms, will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

### 3.3. *Vegetative depictions*

Vegetative representations appear mostly in pottery decoration and figurative pottery, as well as on a few ivory objects. They are, nevertheless, not extremely common. Several motifs, such as the lotus and papyrus are strongly related to the Egyptian culture, while the palm tree and pomegranate are important Canaanite symbols.

#### 3.3.1. *The tree*

The tree is a very important Canaanite and Mesopotamian motif (e.g., Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 56–68, 72–4; Ornan 2005: 153–9; Yasur-Landau 2008: 224), also having significant religious symbolism (often referred to as ‘the tree of life’ or ‘sacred tree’).

##### 3.3.1.1. *Pottery decoration*

Palm trees appear on Philistine Monochrome kraters from Ekron (fig. 3.87:1–2; Dothan and Zuckerman 2004: figs. 16:1, 18:18), as well as on several vessels of the Canaanite traditions, such as carinated bowls and biconical kraters and jugs (e.g., Ashdod, Strata XIII–XII, Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: fig. 3.30; Ekron, Strata VII–VI, Mazow 2005: pl. 4.12f; Zuckerman, Dothan and Gitin forthcoming). Interestingly, this is a Canaanite motif, not very common in the Aegean world, which is incorporated within the Philistine ceramic decoration (although rarely) from the earliest phase (see Yasur-Landau 2008: 224 on the strong Canaanite and non-Philistine meaning of the tree motif). One of the examples is very schematic (fig. 3.87:2), while the other is quite naturalistic (fig. 3.87:1). Examples come from Philistine Bichrome kraters as well (e.g., Azor, fig. 3.87:3; see Dothan 1982: 215).

##### 3.3.1.2. *Depictions on the Yavneh stands*

Depictions of palm trees are actually quite common in the assemblage of cultic stands from Yavneh (figs. 3.28–3.29; Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 22–3),

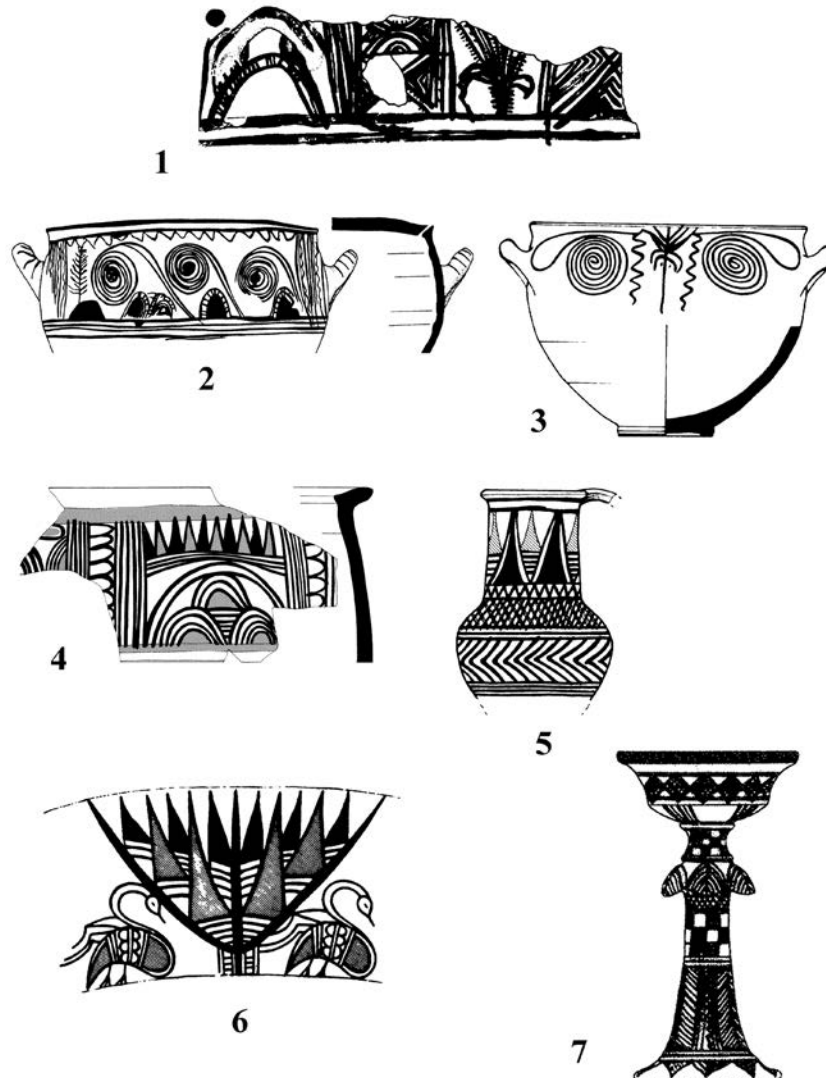


Figure 3.87. Vegetative depictions on Philistine pottery.

often appearing with nude females. Many stands also depict petalled columns that are also probably related to the palm tree motif, as an architectural element (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 23–4). The most detailed and naturalistic depiction of palm trees in high relief comes from a stand, which also depicts three female figures in windows (fig. 3.29; Ziffer and Kletter 2007: no. 2006-998). The stem is depicted with crisscross incisions, and the branches are depicted in great detail, showing the heavy burden of the date

clusters. In two examples, the palm tree appears incised between two nude females (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: nos. 2006-1007, 2006-1054). In three more schematic examples, the palm tree appears with nude female and bull heads, while two or four caprides/ibexes are flanking its sides, in the typical Canaanite Late Bronze Age tradition (fig. 3.28; Ziffer and Kletter 2007: nos. 2006-994, 2006-1040, 2006-1033). Note that the palm tree is usually a singular motif on the stand, possibly because of its role as a sacred object. The frequent and highly stylized appearances of the palm tree motif on the Yavneh stands, further emphasizes the strong Canaanite religious symbolism this assemblage manifests (see also Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 56–68, references therein; see Yasur-Landau 2008: 224 on the religious meaning of the palm tree and ibexes motif).

A jar handle from late Iron Age II Ashdod has a stamp impression depicting a proto-Aeolic capital or palmette, while at its base, a beetle or a scarab topped by a sun disc may be depicted (Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: fig. 3.111:9). The item seems to have been the imprint of a Phoenician seal of the type depicting Egyptian scarabs or Hieroglyphic signs, topped by the palmette or proto-Aeolic capital motif. A complete example of such bronze stamps, although quite larger, comes from Horbat Rosh Zayit (Gal 1994; Gal and Alexandre 2000: 186–7, fig. VII.7 and see discussion therein) and Megiddo, Stratum VA (Loud 1948: pl. 163:24). The tree symbol and its architectural manifestation as a building column is also an important motif in the Yavneh cultic stands. The proto-Aeolic capitals known from Israel and Judah (e.g., Shiloh 1979; Barkay 1992: 315–20) can also be seen in the same ‘symbolic’ light of the palm tree. As noted above, the palmette also appears on a stone cosmetic spoon from Iron Age II Ekron (fig. 3.45). Thus, in addition to its cultural and religious importance, this theme can be also seen as one of the power symbols in the southern Levant during the Iron Age (Schmitt 2001). It is probable that in the Iron Age Levant, the image of the tree had already become a general, widespread symbol for power, prosperity and well-being.

### 3.3.2. *The pomegranate*

#### 3.3.2.1. *Pomegranate vessels*

Another class of figurative pottery appearing in Philistia is the pomegranate vessel, either as a freestanding vessel or as a component on kernoi (figs. 3.88–3.89:1–5; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2007). An intact pomegranate-shaped vessel found at Ekron Stratum IVA, in Room A of Building 350 (fig. 3.88; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2007: 4, fig. 3) is red-slipped and burnished on the exterior. The body of the vessel is naturalistic, but the neck is high and bottle-like and can therefore be seen as a functional free-standing vessel, rather than a purely decorative object. A complete pomegranate vessel

from Ashdod was found on a Stratum XIb floor (fig. 3.89:1, Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 160, fig. 3.61). Two complete pomegranate-shaped vessels were recovered from the Stratum X Temple 131 at Tel Qasile (fig. 3.89:2–3). One came from Room 188 (the storage room behind the ‘bamah’) and the other from Corridor 134, leading into it (Mazar 1980: 116, fig. 46:1–2). They have two symmetrical pierced holes on the neck for suspension and are red-slipped and decorated with black lines on the shoulder and neck; one has white lines as well (similar to the decoration on LPDW vessels). A red-slipped pomegranate vessel was also recovered in the excavations conducted by Moshe Dothan at Azor (Ben-Shlomo 2008b: fig. 19:10). The object was found in Burial D30, together with a rich assemblage of grave goods dating to the Iron Age IIA. Another example comes from the cultic corner at Gath, dated to the late 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE (A. Maeir, personal communication); the find spot of this example (together with those from Tel Qasile) may reinforce the connection of this vessel type to cultic contexts in Philistia. A pomegranate vessel from Tell Abu Zuweid near Rafah should also be mentioned (Petrie 1937: 12, pl. 38:D).

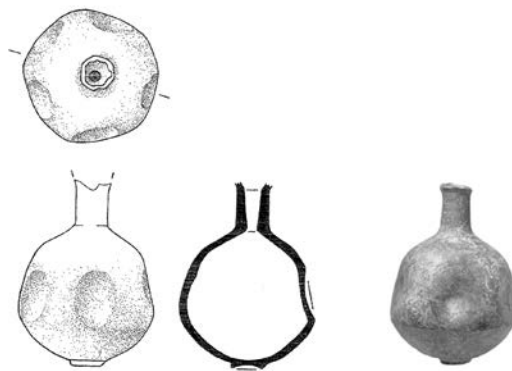


Figure 3.88. Pomegranate vessel from Ekron (after Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2007: fig. 3).

Pomegranate kernos vessels include an example from Stratum VC at Ekron (fig. 3.89:4), as well as a red-slipped pomegranate from a kernos that was found in an unstratified context (Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2007: fig. 9:2). A 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE cache of special objects from Tell Gezer yielded two ceramic pomegranates (fig. 3.89:5; the kernos fragment from Gezer also includes a bird decorated in Philistine Bichrome style; Macalister 1912: 236, fig. 390:1; Dothan 1982: 219–24, pl. 1). A bowl with an attached pomegranate is reported from the same context, but is not illustrated (Macalister 1912: 237). Another example of a bowl with a pomegranate in the center comes from Ekron, Stratum IB. The red-slipped ceramic pomegranate is applied to the center of the bowl (Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2007: fig. 10:1;



a more complete example comes from Tel Halif – Seger and Borowski 1977: 166). Two examples of ceramic pomegranates were discovered at Tel Sera' (Mazar 1980: 116; Oren 1993: 1331; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2007: 10–11, fig. 11:2–3) and are reported to have come from the floor of a hall in a late 13<sup>th</sup>–early 12<sup>th</sup> century Stratum IX building identified as a temple. The objects were suspended from a protrusion on the base and are not independent vessels.

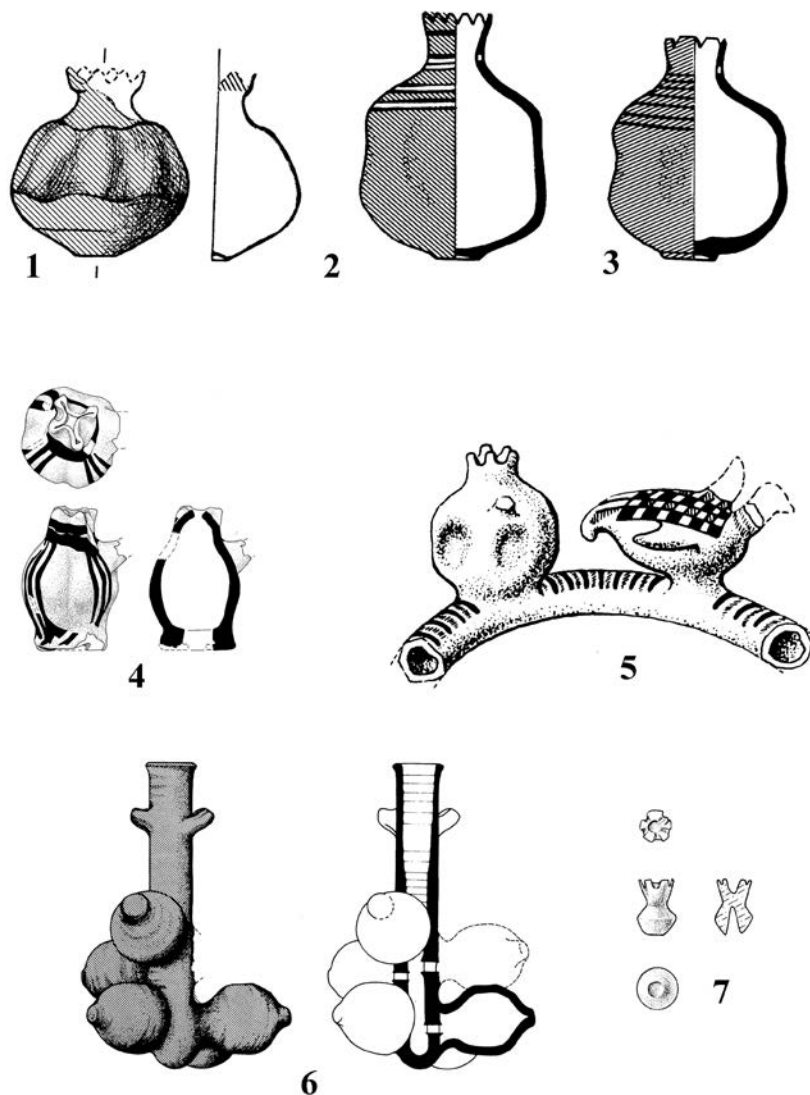


Figure 3.89. Pomegranate vessels from Philistia.

Pomegranates are a well-known symbol of fertility, no doubt because of their multitude of seeds and possibly their blood-colored juice (e.g., Muthmann 1982; Immerwahr 1989; Rova 2008). The cultic significance of pomegranates has been noted both in Canaanite and Israelite religion (e.g., May 1935: 18; Immerwahr 1989: 405). Pomegranates (or opium poppies) have also been associated with the Anatolian goddess Kubaba, both through texts and iconographic representations (Rova 2008; see also Ziffer and Kletter 2007: fig. 10). In this light, it was suggested that pomegranates are connected to feminine symbolism (possibly in relation to fertility, and/or menstrual bleeding; see, Rova 2008, and references therein). According to the evidence gathered thus far, pomegranate vessels seem to be quite popular, particularly in late Iron Age I and Iron Age IIA Philistia. According to the context of some of these objects, they were probably associated with various cultic practices. Their symbolism in Philistia is likely to have been related to the positive properties attributed to pomegranates mentioned above, or more specifically, to a major Philistine female deity.

#### 3.3.2.2. *Ivory and bone pomegranates or opium poppies*

Small ivory pomegranates (also identified by certain scholars as opium poppies, see, e.g., Merrillees 1962) are related to the ivory rods on which they were affixed. One example comes from Ekron (fig. 3.89:7; Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 15:4, table 1:43; as well as several rods from Ekron and Ashdod noted therein). It has a conical perforation, an angular body and a five-pointed calyx. Another Iron Age I ivory pomegranate was found at Ashkelon (Stager, Schloen and Master 2008: fig. 15.18, described there as an opium poppy). Similar ivory pomegranates come from Lachish (Tufnell *et al.* 1940: pl. XX:25–26), Achziv (E. Mazar 2001: fig. 25:5), Ugarit (Gachet 1987: pl. 1:8) and Cyprus (Kourou 1994: 206–7, fig. 1:5). The objects chronologically range from the Late Bronze Age II to the Iron Age II.

#### 3.3.3. *Lotus*

##### 3.3.3.1. *Pottery decoration*

The lotus flower, which is an Egyptian motif, appears quite commonly on Philistine Bichrome pottery (fig. 3.87:4–6; Dothan 1982: 215). As noted above, the lotus represents rebirth in Egypt, while also serving as the symbol of Upper Egypt, as opposed to the papyrus, which is a symbol of Lower Egypt. On pottery, the flower, with large rectangular inner leaves, is either completely (fig. 3.87:6) or, more commonly, partially (fig. 3.87:5) depicted. In other cases, only the vertical triangles are depicted (as fig. 3.87:4, usually in interchanging black and red), illustrating a schematic, abstract version of this theme. The motif is usually associated with jugs with high, thickening necks, which also allude to Egyptian culture in their form (fig. 3.87:5–6;

Dothan 1982: 172–3, figs. 46–50). The motif usually appears on the neck of the vessel. A recently published fragmentary depiction on pottery comes from Ashkelon (Stager, Schloen and Master 2008: fig. 15.11:20,23). Interestingly, this is a Philistine Monochrome example, coming from the earliest Iron Age I level, Phase 20.

### 3.3.3.2. *Ivory*

The lotus also appears in the hand of one of the swimmers from the ivory inlay from Ekron (fig. 3.43, see above), as well as on objects from the ivory assemblage of Temple-Palace 650 (see above). In this case, the motif also indicates clear Egyptian tradition. A lotus shaped scepter head was found at Ekron Stratum IB (obj. no. 1720), and has a decoration of a continuous running series of triangular leafs with rounded bases, defined as the ‘lotus chain motif’. Somewhat similar ivory objects were found in the Southeast palace of Nimrud, having the same outer decoration (Barnett 1957: 211, pls. 80–1; other possible parallels are from Megiddo, Stratum VIIA, Loud 1939: 15, pl. 15:97; Ugarit, Gachet 1987: 253, pl. 2:15 and Hala Sultan Teke, Late Cypriote IIIA, Kourou 1994: 204, fig. 1:2).

### 3.3.4. *Papyrus*

Another typical Egyptian motif is the Papyrus plant. It appears on several Egyptian-style ivories from Philistia: on the background of the swimmers’ inlay from Ekron (fig. 3.43); in the hand of figures on inlays from Ekron (fig. 3.47:1–2) and Tell el-Far‘ah (S) (fig. 3.46); in a high relief in the form of a bush on an Ekron inlay (fig. 3.47:4); and on an inlay from Ashkelon, also depicting a boat (Stager 1991). On the neck of a very unusual jar from the Tel Qasile Temple, several plants are drawn in black over red burnish (Mazar 1980: 105–6, fig. 38). The drawing shows two types of plants on top of a row of triangles; these are possibly papyri and/or lotus plants (or possibly trees).

### 3.3.5. *Other vegetative depictions*

Chalices with drooping leaves appear at Gath (fig. 3.87:7; Maeir and Shai 2006: 359–63, figs. 5–7, references therein), Ekron (Gitin 1998: 169; Dothan, Girin and Zukerman 2006: fig. 3.31:9), Batash, Ashdod, Nahal Patish (P. Nahshoni, personal communication) and other sites. These are often decorated in red and black over white slip (in Philistine Bichrome style), yet, they appear throughout the Iron Age (from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE). This depiction represents a certain vegetative motif, possibly relating to the Canaanite Asherah cult (see, Hestrin 1987; Keel and Uehlinger 1998: 72,232–40), in which case they are probably continuing Canaanite traditions

of the Late Bronze Age (see, Beck 2000: 174); yet, these objects preserve Philistine decorative techniques (Maeir and Shai 2006: 363).

A red-slipped composite libation vessel from Tel Qasile includes a tube and six attached elliptical bodies, possibly depicting fruit, such as figs or pomegranates (fig. 3.89:6; Mazar 1980: 104–5, fig. 37); it is a unique artifact. A conch-shaped, decorated vessel from Tel Qasile (Mazar 1980: 115–16, fig. 45) should also be mentioned in this context, as it may have been an imitation of a decorated shell.

### *3.4. Geometric and other abstract representations*

Most decoration on Philistine pottery is made up of geometric motifs. Many of the geometric patterns appearing on the Philistine decorated pottery, as well as on ivory and bone objects, may not have specific symbolic meaning; these depictions may either be universal decorative patterns or related to specific potters. In this case, immigrant potters originating from the Aegean and/or Cyprus were probably seeking to preserve the traditions of their craft. Several motifs (such as the spiral and streamer), however, may be more important and symbolically communicative as they are notably characteristic of the Philistine culture, and are very common, possibly expressing a certain maritime symbolism.

#### *3.4.1. Aegean motifs: decoration on pottery*

The vast majority of Philistine pottery decoration includes geometric or abstract motifs, which appear on almost all types of vessels (fig. 3.90; Dothan 1982: 203–13, figs. 65–71). On smaller bowls, the compositions include several motifs, for example spirals (fig. 3.90:6–7) and tongues (fig. 3.90:1–4), while larger kraters and closed vessels occasionally depict very dense compositions, including other motifs, such as triangles (fig. 3.87:4), semi-circles (fig. 3.90:8), checkerboards (e.g., figs. 3.74:5, 3.75:2–3, 3.90:8), lozenges (e.g., figs. 3.74:5, 3.75:1, 3.90:8) and Maltese crosses (fig. 3.90:7). This type of dense composition, appearing already in the Monochrome stage (fig. 3.90:4–6, see Dothan and Zukerman 2004: 44), becomes more common in the Bichrome stage, especially at Ashdod (e.g., figs. 3.87:4, 3.90:8; e.g., Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 145, figs. 3.52–3.55). The latter may be influenced by LH IIIC Middle pottery, although a direct connection is yet to be proven. The geometric motifs are placed in horizontal registers—with one register on open vessels and two on closed ones (on the belly and shoulder).

The most common motifs on Philistine pottery include: horizontal lines; single, antithetic (separated by a vertical wavy line) and stemmed spirals (fig. 3.90:6–7); antithetic and stemmed tongues, separated by various motifs (fig. 3.90:1–4); quirks; suspended semicircles; circles and half circles;

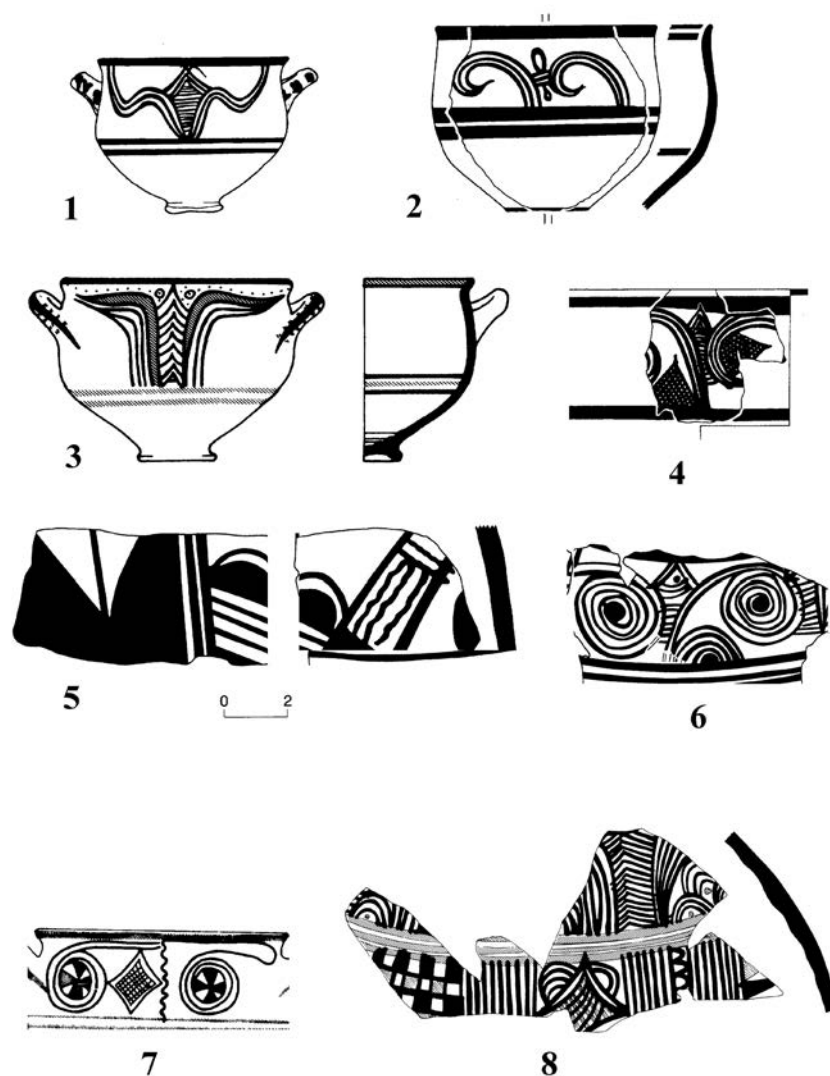


Figure 3.90. Geometric motifs on Philistine pottery.

checkerboards (e.g., fig. 3.75:2); lozenges; and triglyphs (e.g., fig. 3.90:8). An elaborated wavy tongue or streamer motif comes from a Monochrome fragment from Ashkelon (Stager, Schloen and Master 2008: fig. 15.33:6).<sup>54</sup> In general, however, many of these patterns may not reflect figurative depic-

<sup>54</sup> On the typology and the Aegean and Cypriote origins of these motifs see Dothan 1982: 203–13 and Dothan and Zukerman 2004.

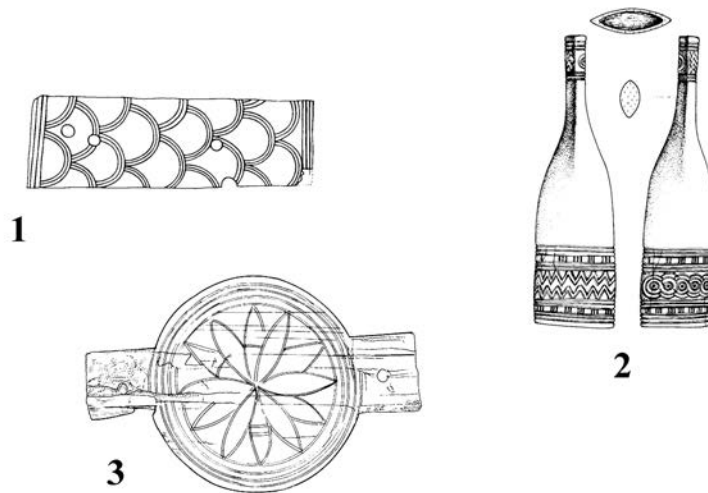


Figure 3.91. Geometric motifs on ivories from Ashdod and Ekron.

tions, and thus, will not be treated here in great detail. Most motifs continue from the Monochrome into the Bichrome stage (Dothan and Zukerman 2004: 41–2; Ben-Shlomo 2006a: 45–6, table 1.5), with only rare motifs disappearing; in the later stage, the motifs become less faithful to their Aegean prototypes, being drawn more carelessly, and eventually degenerating. Some motifs, especially those showing Egyptian influence (such as the triangles and lotus, fig. 3.87:4–6; see also Petrie 1930: pl. 23:4 from Tell el-Far‘ah (S) and Dothan 1982: figs. 45–50), make their initial substantial appearance in the Philistine Bichrome assemblage.

*Bone and ivory.* Inlays from Ashdod Stratum XII (fig. 3.91:1; Dothan and Porath 1993: fig. 38:6) and a comb from Ekron (Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 14:2, see other parallels therein) are incised with a pattern of scales, which may be considered an Aegean motif, common on Mycenaean and Philistine pottery (e.g., Dothan 1982: 212). Other Iron Age I cosmetic boxes and palettes from Ekron, Ashdod and Tel Qasile are decorated using various geometric patterns, such as concentric circles (see Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: 20), while fan handles from Ashdod are decorated with running spirals and other geometric motifs (fig. 3.91:2; Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 127–8; Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 9:6–7).

#### 3.4.2. Other motifs

A lid of a cylindrical box/pyxis from Ekron (fig. 3.91:3; Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: 18, fig. 11:2) is decorated with a 12-leaf rosette made by a



compass, surrounded by three very fine double concentric circles. A similar rosette can be seen on an inlay from Megiddo (Loud 1939: pl. 5:8). A similar lid made of bone (obj. no. 1581) was also recovered from Ekron, although it is more crudely made; it has a six-leaf rosette and larger perforations. An incised rosette also appears on one of the Yavneh stands (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 25–6, no. 2006-1064). Whether the rosette was merely used as an aesthetic symmetrical motif or had symbolic or even religious meaning is still open to much speculation.

Several scholars have emphasized the importance of Philistine pottery and its decorative motifs to the ‘group identity’ of the Philistines (such as Bunimovitz and Faust 2001; Sharon 2001). It may be suggested however, that as far as abstract geometric designs are concerned, the iconographic aspects of the Philistine decorative pottery reflect the connections to the Mycenaean pottery in a general manner rather than specific symbolic meanings or messages. Motifs such as triglyphs, lozenges, concentric circles and checkerboards may not have any specific symbolic meaning, even though they may be rooted in Mycenaean pottery designs (although they are quite universal in their nature). However, motifs such as antithetic spirals, and heraldic tongues (fig. 3.90:1–4,7), as well as more elaborate wavy tongues and streamers, which are highly characteristic of Philistine decorated pottery, may have more meaning. These motifs, or at least some of them, seem to have certain maritime connotations, possibly as depictions of the waves in the sea. This maritime iconography is also manifested by the fish and possibly bird motifs, which are apparently the primary Philistine symbols as seen in the material culture (note also the ships in fig. 3.13). This ensemble of motifs is possibly indicative of a certain Philistine symbolism, ‘ethnic’ ideology or identity, expressed by these depictions, which have connections to the sea and reflect their origin (see also, Wachsmann 1998: 177–97; Wachsmann 2000; Yasur-Landau 2008).

### *3.5. Contextual analysis of the find spots of objects with iconographic representations*

This section presents a short survey of the contexts in which the objects from Iron Age Philistia depicting iconographic representation were found in, both from a chronological aspect (the dating of the contexts) and a functional aspect (the type of context, whether domestic, public, funerary or cultic). It should be stressed that contextual analysis is not the aim of this study and it is brought here for complementary information; moreover, much of the archaeological analysis of the sites under consideration is still underway and thus contextual analysis is either not available or provisional.

An example of a more detailed analysis is presented for the context and chronological distribution of Aegean-style figurines (Press 2007: 248–51,

table 1; Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: 61–3). As noted above, the stratigraphic analysis of Tel Miqne-Ekron and Ashkelon is still in progress (see, however, Stager, Schloen, and Master 2008: 216–7). Yet, the function of the figurines should be derived primarily from their context.<sup>55</sup> Other than one example from Ashdod, however, no complete (or nearly complete) Aegean-style figurine has been found in Philistia. This fact may limit the significance of any contextual analysis, as small fragments of figurines could easily be redeposited from earlier strata and different architectural contexts within the site in mudbricks, walls, and fills (this reservation is true for most categories of archaeological finds discussed in this work).<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, the findspots of several of the larger examples may well be of significance, especially as an indication of the basic types of contexts in which these figurines were found (e.g., whether they are characteristic of domestic or public buildings; see also table 4 below).

At Ashdod, the nearly complete ‘Ashdoda’ figurine (fig. 3.9) was found in Area H, Stratum XI, within a small room in a building abutting the street (Dothan 1971: 161, plan 21). No other Aegean-style figurines or special finds were found in this room. The unique ‘apsidal building’ of Stratum XII on the other side of the street (Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 23–5, plan 2.5) contained no figurines. In the affluent Building 5337 of Stratum XII (Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: 26–30, plans 2.5–2.7), only one possible fragment of an ‘Ashdoda’ figurine was found in the main hall (Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: fig. 3.36:4), while the two Psi-type figurines (Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: fig. 3.36:2–3) were found in Building 5128 on the other side of the street, below the building where the complete ‘Ashdoda’ was found (figs. 3.1:5, 3.2:1). The other examples from Strata XI–X in Areas H and G were found in fills or pits in open areas. During the Iron Age II, in Ashdod Stratum VII, Area D, several fragments of the Late ‘Ashdoda’ type, with only the seat preserved, were found primarily in pits, together with a large number of kernos fragments (Dothan 1971: fig. 63; Ben-Shlomo 1999: 122, fig. 36). Several pits of Stratum VII (Dothan 1971: plan 8, Pits 1067, 1096, and 1122) contained two or three examples of ‘Ashdoda’ seat fragments each, as well as plaque figurines of the Canaanite tradition and zoomorphic kernoi (Dothan 1971: figs. 64, 70). The interpretation of these contexts as favissae of a possible Iron Age IIB cult place near the city wall (similar to the one presented in Stratum VII: Dothan and Freedman 1967: 133–4, plan 7; Yasur-Landau 2001: 335) cannot be ruled out. However, these pits could simply be refuse pits related to the industrial area (Ben-Shlomo 1999: 122), thus representing material discarded from domestic contexts. The pits postdate the cultic room and contain many other pottery vessels as well, and thus may not be directly

<sup>55</sup> Cf. French (1971: 107; 1981b: 173) on the Mycenaean figurines; see also Nilsson 1968: 307–9.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Mazow (2005: 247, 388) on ‘primary’ vs. ‘secondary’ discard practices/behaviors at Ekron.

associated with the cultic structure. Only one 'miniature' late 'Ashdoda' seat was found in Room 1010 near the 'cultic corner' (Dothan 1971: fig. 43:7). Other fragments from Area D, Strata IX–VII come from various open areas.

In Grid 38 at Ashkelon, no Aegean-style figurines were found in Phase 20. In Phase 19 two Psi-type figurines were found, one in a mudbrick wall and the other in the occupational debris of a house. The figurines are more common in Phases 18 and 17, with over a dozen found scattered among the fills and floors of the 'north villa,' the 'south villa,' and the courtyard in between them.<sup>57</sup> Apparently, these contexts all reflect domestic buildings of relatively affluent Philistine households.<sup>58</sup>

At Ekron, five zoomorphic figurines come from Stratum VII, the earliest Iron I stratum, while no female figurines appear in this stage. All but one of the Aegean-style bovine figurines came from Field INE, including the large bovine fragment (fig. 3.52:1), found in an area of industrial character (Ben-Shlomo 1999: fig. 4); two additional fragments were found near the Stratum VIA kilns (Ben-Shlomo 1999: fig. 5). One figurine was found in an open area in Field IV Lower, Stratum VIIB (obj. no. 6641: Ben-Shlomo 1999: fig. 7). In Stratum VI, a Psi-type figurine (fig. 3.1:1) was found in relation to the rounded Hearth 23086, in Room A of Building 354 (Mazow 2005: 271). In the same room, in Stratum IVB, an 'Ashdoda' fragment was found (fig. 3.10:6). It seems, however, that no such figurines were found in Public Building 350. Two figurine heads were found in a Stratum VIA pit in Field ISW. In Field INE, in debris near the 'cultic' room of Area INE.3 (Dothan 2003a:208, fig. 17), a decorated torso of a zoomorphic figurine was found (fig. 3.52:3; Ben-Shlomo 1999: 117, fig. 6). Other Aegean-style figurine fragments came from fills or unstratified contexts.

At Tel Qasile, no Aegean-style figurines were found in the temple. Two examples (Mazar 1986: fig. 6:1–2) were found, however, in a domestic area (in Area A). It is also noteworthy that the Yavneh favissa (though quite later), which probably contained cultic objects from a Philistine Iron Age IIA temple located at Tel Yavneh, included no Aegean-style figurines (Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 28)—although some of the human figurines attached to the cult stands display Philistine elements, as mentioned above. Therefore, the contextual data, although partial, points to the appearance of the Aegean-style figurines in domestic contexts, rather than in temples or public buildings (see also Yasur-Landau 2001: 335), at least for the Iron Age I. It should be noted that Palace-Temple Complex 650 of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE at Ekron, which was dedicated to a female Philistine goddess, *Ptgyh* (Gitin, Dothan, and

<sup>57</sup> See Cross and Stager (2006: 132), Stager (2006a: 14), and Stager, Schloen, and Master (2008: 266, 272) for recent published citations of this distribution. Note, however, that the figurines were not concentrated in the 'north villa,' as cited by Cross and Stager.

<sup>58</sup> Note that the Iron Age I stratigraphy for Grid 38 is still being analyzed, making a detailed contextual study of the figurines not yet possible. For a provisional discussion, see Press 2007: 269, 314.

Naveh 1997; Schäfer-Lichtenberger 2000; Yasur-Landau 2001: 337–8), also yielded no such figurines (S. Gitin, personal communication). The appearance of the late ‘Ashdoda’ figurines at Iron Age II Ashdod may reflect the same domestic use which they carried during the Iron Age I (contra Yasur-Landau 2001: 335). One type of context for which we have almost no information, however, is funerary, as no cemetery of the Philistine cities has been excavated. The mourning figurines could fill this gap, if we rely on the few unprovenanced examples (discussed above); on the other hand, no evidence for Aegean-style figurines comes from the excavated burials at Azor, or from the Tell el-Far‘ah (S) 500 cemetery.

A comparison of the contexts of Mycenaean figurines in the Aegean is helpful, especially as the objects themselves seem similar (which is not usually the case for other objects carrying iconographic representations in Philistia). While earlier studies in particular associated Mycenaean figurines with burials (e.g., Tsountas 1888: 167; Mylonas 1966: 114; for discussion and references, see French 1971: 107–8; Tzonou-Herbst 2002: Chapter 2), neither female nor zoomorphic figurines are necessarily common in LH IIIB and IIIC funerary contexts. At Perati a total of 14 female figurines (seven mourning figurines—from just two tombs—and seven Psi figurines) were found in a cemetery of 219 tombs, most of which were chamber tombs with multiple burials (Iakovidis 1969). There were similar numbers in the cemetery at Ialysos (about 20 figurines), again with over 100 graves (Maiuri 1923–1924; Benzi 1992; see Tzonou-Herbst 2002: 264–5). On the other hand, these figurines seem to be quite common in domestic contexts. Very large numbers have been cited for Mycenae (over 1,100; French 1971: 107) and for LH IIIB Midea (175 in total; Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 2001: 182). These include large numbers of fragments from what are apparently secondary contexts—but in any case, these are figurines that were not deposited in tombs. Other examples of LH IIIC figurines in domestic contexts include Aigeira (Afram-Stern 2006) and Lefkandi (French 2006) on the mainland, and Chania in Crete (Winbladh 2000). Figurines are also relatively rare in LH IIIC ‘official’ shrines’ (e.g., at Mycenae: Moore and Taylour 1999; and Phylakopi: French 1985), where cult images in the form of the large terracotta figures were found (e.g., French 1981b). The LH IIIC shrine at Asine is a possible exception (Hägg 1981).<sup>59</sup> The appearance of these figurines in relatively large quantities in domestic contexts (e.g., Kilian 1990; Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 2001) has often been associated with beads and other small finds (Tzonou-Herbst 2002: 206–39) during the LH IIIB and C (Kilian 1990; M. Veters, personal communication).<sup>60</sup> Kalapodi is another example of an LH IIIC shrine (along with Asine) with Psi and other figu-

<sup>59</sup> See Press 2007 for further discussions of Mycenaean cultic contexts and their significance for Philistine female figurines.

<sup>60</sup> I wish to thank Melissa Veters of Heidelberg University, who is currently working on the figurines from Tiryns, for informing me of some of her still unpublished results.

rines, although there are no large terracotta figures reported there (Felsch 1981, 2001: 195, pl. 58b). At Tiryns, Psi and bovine figurines were found in various rooms in the Unterburg LH IIIC levels (Kilian 1978: figs. 6–7, 1979: 390–1, figs. 12–15, 1982: figs. 29–31), yet in cultic Rooms 110 and 117, only hollow bovine figures were reported (Kilian 1992: 21). At Tiryns and other sites, there may be a general decrease in the number of female figurines during the LH IIIC (Kilian 1992: 24; French 2006: 261; M. Vettters, personal communication). French (1981a: 45) reports that no bovine figurines appear at the LH IIIB2 sanctuaries of Mycenae, and their findspots are mainly domestic. In analyzing the contexts of figurines at Mycenae and Prosymna, Tzonou-Herbst (2002: 264–5) concluded that during the LH IIIA2–B there is a rise in the occurrence of figurines in burials. It is not clear if this pattern is more widespread, however. Furthermore, even at these sites, the majority of figurines came from the settlements and not from cemeteries (see Tzonou-Herbst 2002: 279). Finally, it is worth noting that the appearance of figurines in connection with hearths, as at Ekron, was recorded at Chania, Crete, where two Phi-type figurines were found near a circular LM IIIB2 hearth (D'Agata 2001: 347).

In dealing with the contexts of Late Cypriot female and zoomorphic figurines, Begg reached several conclusions regarding the Mycenaean type bovine figurines (Begg 1991: 63, type III.1). Some are found in domestic contexts, while others are related to cultic contexts, mainly related to industrial and metallurgical installations. He reconstructed their positions on benches or high places near the walls (Begg 1991: 19). In his view, these figurines are not connected to the 'Sea Peoples' of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE, but reflect the use of rare, foreign, cult objects, by the local elite (Begg 1991: 39). However, the large assemblage, consisting mostly of Psi-like figurines, found in the courtyard and units to the west of the Sanctuary of the Ingot God at Enkomi (Courtois 1971: 326–43, figs. 141–54), may indicate that these figurines appeared suddenly during the LC IIIC (Webb 1999: 213–5) or the CG I (Karageorghis 2001: 324), and were related to (possibly new) cultic practices in Cyprus. Therefore, on a whole, the appearance of the Aegean-style figurines in domestic contexts in Philistia appears to parallel finds of similar 13<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> century BCE figurines published thus far, especially in the Aegean. The undecorated zoomorphic figurines, of which many were found in Iron Age I Ekron, also show the same contextual distribution.

While the zoomorphic vessels from Ekron and Ashdod come from diversified contexts (Ben-Shlomo 1999, 2008a), the contexts of the complete examples are probably more significant. In the Ekron Iron Age I Strata (VII–IV), several zoomorphic vessels were found in open areas, for example, the two vessels from Field IV (figs. 3.57:1, 3.65:1). Zoomorphic vessels were also found in domestic buildings, such as in Field IV, Stratum V and Field III, Stratum VIA. Other complete vessels were found in Field IV, in the Stratum VIB hearth room (Building 357; fig. 3.76:1). In Field X, a complete hedgehog vessel (fig. 3.81) was found in a Stratum VIIA casemate room of the



city wall. Twelve zoomorphic vessel fragments were found in or near Public Building 350 (Field IV, Strata V–IV, including a large kernos fragment with ibexes), and seven objects were found in or near a possible cultic room in Field INE, Stratum V. Kernoi with zoomorphic spouts, mostly bovine, appear occasionally in cultic contexts at Gath, such as the cultic corner (A. Maeir, personal communication), and at the Tel Qasile temple (Mazar 1980). Generally, however, most objects come from what may be categorized as domestic or unspecified contexts. During the Late Bronze and Iron Ages, zoomorphic vessels were frequently associated with burials (see Gershuny 1991; Ben-Shlomo 1999). One of the complete bovine vessels from Ekron (see above, fig. 3.58:1) is also associated with a burial (although within an olive oil press). Yet, cemeteries have not yet been found in Philistia proper. Two complete vessels from a Stratum IB olive oil factory in Field III (fig. 3.58:1–2) may indicate a connection between the zoomorphic vessels and the olive oil industry. The Stratum IB destruction level of Temple Complex 650, in which there was a sanctuary, yielded eight objects, one of which is a complete zoomorphic vessel (fig. 3.59:1), found in a room immediately behind the cella. This vessel is thus securely dated by the Babylonian destruction of 604 BCE and may be defined as a cultic object on the basis of its find spot. Two other zoomorphic terracottas also come from buildings in the vicinity of Temple Complex 650 (including the lion head cup, fig. 3.69:3). Another iconographic representation from this building is a Phoenician-style female figurine (fig. 3.35:2, and large ivories in Egyptian and Canaanite style, which may have been stored as a cache, e.g., fig. 3.48).

The appearance of cultic paraphernalia in connection with industrial installations, as attested to at Ekron, is not surprising, and appears at other sites as well. The four-horned altars and chalices found near olive oil installations in the industrial zone at Ekron (e.g., Gitin 1989, 1993, 2003) are examples of this cultic-industrial connection. Further supporting this association is the dedicatory inscription “for Ba‘al and for Padi”, found on the storage jar in one of the side rooms of the sanctuary of Temple Complex 650. This room contained the only olive oil installation found *in situ* outside of the industrial zone (Gitin and Cogan 1999: 193–6). It is possible that the concentration of kernoi, late ‘Ashdodas’, offering tables and plaque type figurines in several pits in Area D at Iron Age IIB Ashdod (Dothan 1971; Hachlili 1971) may be related to the industrial activities taking place in this area as well. Other examples of this link come from the mining temple at Timna (Rothenberg 1988: 270–76), and Late Bronze Age Cyprus (Begg 1991: 47, 69), where both metallurgical and agricultural industries were active. In the case of the bovine libation vessels from Ekron, the bull may represent an agricultural/industrial fertility symbol, a specific deity, or the deity’s vehicle (see section 4.2).

Public or elite buildings, such as Building 350 at Ekron and Building 5337 at Ashdod, do illustrate a certain concentration of iconographic objects (e.g. zoomorphic kernoi, ivories in Canaanite style, pomegranate vessels and



a bird rattle); yet, the themes depicted are quite diversified and do not indicate any special inclination towards one type or another. A group of ivories carrying Egyptian iconography, as well as several seals and seal impressions with Egyptian and Canaanite motifs appear at Ekron in domestic contexts of a standard (albeit possibly affluent) house. Pomegranate vessels appear in cultic contexts at least at Tel Qasile and Gath. The bird motif appears in the Tel Qasile temple, yet in a Canaanite form. On the other hand, the assemblage of stands from the Yavneh favissa illustrates how specific motifs can be concentrated in a cultic context. These include the nude female, the bull and lion as well as the palm tree with ibexes. All these are related to Canaanite iconography, both in style and composition. Lion-shaped head cups also appear in several cultic contexts, such as the Tel Qasile and Nahal Patish temples (see further discussion, section 4.4, table 4).

### 3.6. *Summary*

The iconographic representations from Philistia are highly diversified and rather rich. Emphasis here was given to relatively new data coming from excavations of the Philistine sites of Ashdod, Ekron, Gath and Ashkelon. This data spans the Iron Age I and II periods. In addition, the Iron Age II assemblage from Yavneh opens a rare window to new figurative contents previously unknown (as in the depiction of architectural elements). It is quite clear that a Philistine iconographic ‘peculiarity’ or individuality is still evident, yet, less explicit, during the Iron Age II as attested to by the predominance of female depictions and the importance of the bulls and lions. Moreover, only during the Iron Age IIB–C do typical Canaanite female and zoomorphic figurines make their return in Philistia (see below, section 4.1).

The representations discussed in this chapter are schematically summarized in table 2, in order to give a certain quantitative aspect to the assemblage described. By no means is this an exact or complete quantification of the iconographic assemblage of Philistia, as much material is yet to be published, especially when considering painted depictions on pottery from Ekron and Ashkelon (in any case, geometric motifs are not included). Moreover, the count only applies to published illustrative items, and should be regarded as a minimal number. The publication of the Ashdod material is relatively complete, with six volumes of final reports; the material from Ekron includes mostly published material from two reports and other publications (including Ben-Shlomo 1999 and Zukerman, Dothan and Gitin forthcoming) as well as several additional items; the Ashkelon items include objects from publications only (including Press 2007); the Gath material includes only a few items which have been published or mentioned in lectures; the publication of the material from Tel Qasile is quite complete; the items from Yavneh used are the 42 cultic stands published in Ziffer and Kletter 2007.

Notwithstanding the comments above, a quick look at the numbers in table 2 point to a few trends. Altogether, there are about 350 human depictions and 820 animal depictions (this includes a rather large count of zoomorphic vessels and figurines from Ekron, made up of mostly leg and body fragments), and approximately 60 other figurative depictions. This ratio of about 1:2 between anthropomorphic and zoomorphic representations is more or less a typical ratio quoted in other studies of iconographic depictions (mostly in terracottas) of the Iron Age Levant (see, Holland 1975; 1977; 'Amr 1980; Press 2007). Of the human depictions, which are predominantly female (at least 80%; the clear male depictions mostly come from seals or from Egyptian-style depictions), nearly a third are Aegean-style. Of the animal depictions, the relative proportion is about half, and would be much smaller if we exclude the bird motif on decorated pottery vessels. Regarding specific identified themes, the human female is the most common, with 271 examples altogether. Of the animal depictions, birds are the most common with 203 examples (although this is largely due to painted appearances on pottery; with the new evidence being processed from Ekron, Ashkelon and possibly Gath, their number will probably surpass the human female depictions). Otherwise, bovines are the next-most common, and the most frequent in terracottas, with 164 examples. Horses are common in Ashkelon, but, much rarer in other sites, with 107 examples altogether in Philistia. Other animals appear much less, such as the lion with 28 examples and the ibex, with 28 examples; only a few examples of other animals were identified, including the fish, hedgehog, dog etc. Other motifs, such as the tree and pomegranates, are slightly more common, although still not widespread. The Egyptian motifs includes several human depictions from ivories, seals and pendants (including what seem to be a few images of deities), as well the lotus and papyrus motifs. Further discussion of the meaning of the different themes, as well as the functions of the objects they appeared on, will be undertaken in Chapter 4.

Table 2. Summary of iconographic representations in Philistia

<i>Motif</i>	<i>Ashdod</i>	<i>Ekron</i>	<i>Ashkelon</i>	<i>Gath</i>	<i>Yavneh (42 stands)</i>	<i>Qasile</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	<i>Total</i>
Human male	6	4	13 (5 horse riders)	1	-	3		27
Human female Aegean	58	23	33	-	-	2		116
Human female Canaanite	24	11	36 Iron II (27 hollow figurines)	?	2	1		74
Other female	4	5	5	few	-	-		14+
Hybrid/ Phil. female	13	2	1	-	50	1		67
Other human	13	10	2	?	3 (sphinx)	6		34+
Egyptian (all motifs)	14	29 (few deity amulets)	3+	?	-	1	Mostly ivories, seals	47+
Total human	125	63	91	2+	55	14		<b>350</b>
Bull (Aegean)	0	13	-	-	-	-		13
Bull (other)	51	56	6	-	37	1		151
Horse/ donkey	8	14	74	-	2?	9		107
Lion	1	5	2	3	14	3		28
Bird (Aegean)	90	41	4+	4+	-	3	Mostly pottery decoration	142+
Fish	5	4	2	1	-	-		12
Bird (other)	27	18	1	1	-	14		61
Ibex/ram	5	11	?	1	9	3		28
Other animals	12	223 (mostly fragments)	32	?	-	4		272+
Total animal	206	382	121	11+	62	37		<b>820</b>
Pomegranate	1	5	1	1	-	2		10
Tree	6	15	?	?	9	1		31
Other vegetative	1	?	-	-	-	5		6+
Architecture	1	-	-	-	6	1		8
Total vegetative	15	20	1	1	9	8		<b>54</b>
Total	347	485	214	14+	132	60		<b>1252</b>

## Chapter 4

### Iconography, ethnicity, power, cult and religion: The symbolic world of the Philistines

#### *4.1. The development of Philistine style*

The definition and discussion of a Philistine iconographic style will now follow the description of the archaeological evidence. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the assemblage of iconographic depictions from Iron Age Philistia was divided roughly into several styles: Aegean style, Philistine/hybrid style, Canaanite style, and depictions linked to Egyptian iconography. Egyptian motifs are relative easy to identify and define, often related to Egyptian deities, mythology or landscape. The Aegean and the Philistine style were defined in Chapter 2, while the ‘Canaanite’ or Levantine style essentially includes those depiction which do not fall into one of the other categories. This style includes depictions that display affinities with the Canaanite iconographic tradition (when compared to, for example, local objects found in the Late Bronze Age southern Levant, or in the Iron Age outside of Philistia), as well as all other depictions, which are presumed to be of a local tradition. In this sense, this category is not very well-defined (as is true of the ‘Canaanite culture’ of the Bronze Age, which lacks a definition through an in-depth study of its traits, although see Beck 2000 for the Iron Age II). This may be due to the situation in Palestine, where the inhabitants lived in the midst of several cultures (Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia), which continuously influenced their own culture, both during the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age (see, Beck 2000: 165–7). Therefore, the classification here, while not very well-defined, is used as a ‘default’ option for stylistic classifications which do not fit into other categories (i.e., ‘local’ style).

According to the results of this study, I suggest dividing the Philistine iconographic style illustrates into three or four stages of development:

- A. Aegean/Cypriote traditions brought by immigrants: forms and motifs most similar to western (Mycenaean) prototypes.
- B. The development of a Philistine ‘hybrid’ style: a combination of a local development of the Aegean-style components, with local influences integrated into them.
- C. Further hybridization with stronger Canaanite influences.
- D. A late Philistine iconography, during the late Iron Age II, in which there is a significant decrease in Aegean-style components, although some depictions are still stylistically and iconically distinct from ‘local’ culture.

This basic scheme was already submitted by T. Dothan for the development of the Philistine pottery in the Iron Age I (Dothan 1982: A = Monochrome phase, B = Bichrome phase, and C = 'debased' phase), and can be applied to iconographic representation, although chronologically expanding until the end of the Iron Age II (note however, that contrary to Dothan, the last stage is not seen as 'assimilation'; see Ben-Shlomo, Shai and Maeir 2004; Ben-Shlomo 2007 and below). At the same time, Canaanite style and themes persist, with their own local development. In various media, such as in terracottas, the two styles merge. This is, to a certain extent, linked to the chronological/sequential appearance of these depictions in well-dated archaeological levels (see Ben-Shlomo 2008a; Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: 60–62). Following the traditional chronological scheme (e.g., Mazar 1985b, Dothan and Zukerman 2004), the first phase of iconographic development dates to the early 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE, the second phase to the late 12<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, the third to the 10<sup>th</sup> through the early 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the fourth probably to the late 8<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE (see also Ben-Shlomo, Shai and Maeir 2004). Note, however, that this is a highly schematic model, and the dates may vary from site to site.

The artifacts that show Aegean-style iconography (Stage A), with specific forms and morphological details linked directly to contemporary Aegean and Cypriote iconographic representations, include most of the Philistine Monochrome decorative motifs, and several Bichrome motifs. This is especially apparent in vessel forms, and manufacturing technique, which also are relatively faithful to their Mycenaean prototypes (see, also, Killebrew 1998; Ben-Shlomo 2006a: 23–4). Other artifacts belonging to this group are the standing Aegean-style (Psi-type) figurines, a number of zoomorphic vessels and the decorated bovine figurines, occurring in small quantities in the initial stage of the Iron Age I. The representations themselves that belong to this style are relatively limited and include the standing and seated female, the decorated bovine, the bird and fish motifs and various geometric motifs on pottery (see table 3). Only one other human depiction appears, on the pictorial krater from Ashkelon (fig. 3.12). The example from Ashkelon, which may be the only example of an iconographic 'narrative' in Aegean style, however, is not easily understood and may have various interpretations (see above, Stager 2006b; Stager and Mountjoy 2007; Yasur-Landau 2008).

The Aegean-style figurines display a finer stylistic development during the Iron Age. This development is manifested by the appearance of the Psi and bovine figurines, which more closely resemble the Aegean prototypes, and are decorated by Monochrome decoration; later, seated 'Ashdoda'-type figurines appear, which already illustrate a unique Philistine character (Stage B); these are often decorated in the Bichrome style. A debased form of this type appears in the late Iron Age at Ashdod. Philistine Monochrome zoomorphic vessels include two types of vessels inspired by the Mycenaean pottery tradition: the hedgehog vessel and the bird askos (figs. 3.76, 3.81). It should be noted, however, that while bull-shaped vessels and bird vessels appear with Bichrome style decoration, their form lacks any remnant of

Aegean-style iconography (thus, strictly speaking, these do not reflect the hybrid-Philistine style, rather Canaanite-style iconography with Philistine decoration). As T. Dothan (1982: 198–218) has shown, the assemblage of Philistine Bichrome decorative motifs shows certain Aegean-(and probably Cypriote-)rooted motifs, although depicted in a less faithful form, while including motifs that are affiliated with the Canaanite and Egyptian traditions (e.g. the palm tree and lotus,). This description, corresponding to our Stage B, can be defined, as Dothan suggested, as an ‘eclectic’ style.

In Stage C, roughly dating the Iron Age II (ca. 1,000–800 BCE), although probably also including the terminal phases of the Iron Age I (equivalent to Dothan’s ‘debased’ phase, Dothan 1982: 191–7; Ben-Shlomo 2006a: 45), we witness a disappearance of most of the clearly associated Aegean-style forms, and we are left with certain ‘Philistine-style’ elements, which can be detected in specific details of the iconographic depictions in terracottas (as described in Chapters 2 and 3, and Ziffer and Kletter 2007; Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: 41,56). The best examples are the depictions on the numerous cult stands from the Yavneh favissa and the Ashdod ‘Musicians’ stand’ (as well as other terracottas from Ashdod: figs. 3.18–3.29). Fortunately, several of the depictions are complete and illustrate scenes in their entirety that combine several figures. However, these scenes are also not easy to interpret, without similar depictions elsewhere; yet their symbolic content seems to be more affiliated with local Levantine traditions.

In assessing the decorated pottery, the ware that dominates the Iron Age IIA (10<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE) and the early Iron Age IIB, is the ‘LPDW’ or ‘Ashdod Ware’ (Ben-Shlomo, Shai and Maeir 2004). Its decoration is characterized by thick red slip, vertical hand burnish and black and white linear decoration, lacking any Aegean-style motifs; in fact, this ware rarely illustrates any figurative depictions (apart from an example of a horse from Tel Qasile, see above). Yet, zoomorphic vessels and kernoi, as well as several figurines (Ben-Shlomo, Shai and Maeir 2004: 9, fig. 3:9–10; Ben-Shlomo 2006a: 68–9; Ben-Shlomo 2008a: 30–1), are decorated in this style (e.g., figs. 3.22:1, 3.56). In the last stage of development (i.e. the late 8<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE), we witness a decrease in figurative depictions, particularly on pottery. While a late version of the Aegean-style ‘Ashdoda’ figurine may continue at Ashdod, most other depictions are not linked to this style: female plaque figurines, pillar figurines and hollow female figurines as well as horse and horse-and-rider figurines appear in Philistia in various quantities (the evidence from the different sites is diverse). All of these are generally considered to be typical Israelite, Judahite and Phoenician types, although, certain details can indicate a regional variant in Philistia (see Press 2007). This may also be true for a large assemblage of late Iron Age bull shaped libation vessels (figs. 3.58–3.59; Ben-Shlomo 2008a: 32–3), which are particularly prominent at Ekron. Thus, there still may be a regional Philistine style at this stage, present in the iconographic representations, and possibly developing independently at each Philistine city. This individual development in style fits well with the independent city-state status of the Philistine cities in this



period as attested to by Assyrian texts (Tadmor 1966; Shai 2006). Hence, the figurative pottery of Philistia retains a distinct regional style in form, decoration or both; this regional distinction in figurative depictions is characteristic of the Philistine material culture throughout the Iron Age, despite the absorption of local, traditional forms as well. It should be noted, however, that less information (in the form of published artifacts from excavations) is available for the latter part of the Iron Age II (i.e., ca. 800–600 BCE, especially the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE). Therefore, our knowledge on the iconography of Philistia during these periods is still limited in comparison to the Iron Age I–IIA (ca. 1,200–800 BCE; note that at Ashdod and Gath there is a significant decrease in settlement size during the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE). However this situation will probably change with the publication of 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE remains from Ekron and Ashkelon.

In most cases, figurative depictions on bone and ivory objects and glyptics from Iron Age I Philistia show a stronger connection with the Late Bronze Age II Canaanite tradition and various Egyptian styles of the latter second millennium BCE, as well as stronger links with similar depictions during the Iron Age outside of Philistia. The influence of Aegean and/or Cypriote elements on these artifacts is not strong. It is possible that ivory carving was a more conservative craft, with deep roots in Levantine traditions (also due to the value of the media), and was thus not affected by the arrival of the Philistine immigrants (see also Fischer 2007 on the Egyptian influence on Levantine ivories).

The stylistic developments of iconographic representation in Philistia can be integrated with processes that are typical of immigrant societies and the archaeological matter that they produce (e.g., Rouse 1986; Anthony 1990, 1992; Burmeister 2000). The subject of migration in archaeology was not given much attention until the 1990's (Burmeister 2000: 539), with only few studies dealing with it exclusively. This is particularly true of the southern Levant (for the Philistines, see, however, Yasur-Landau 2002, 2003, and more general references therein). It seems that this issue, which has received much attention in other social sciences, was almost intentionally avoided by archaeologists, especially during the 1950s–1970s. This may have been a result of the rise of processual archaeology (see Adams 1968; Adams et al. 1978; Burmeister 2000 for references). Another obstacle may be ethnicity, which is closely associated with migration, and which is difficult to deal with archaeologically (e.g., Barth 1969; Sackett 1990; Jones 1997; Bahrani 2005). However, Burmeister has indicated the importance of a 'semiotic function of material behavior' for understanding migration phenomena in archaeology (Burmeister 1997; Burmeister 2000: 540); and indeed, this semiotic function is an important component of iconographic studies.

If one agrees that the Philistine paradigm is one of migration, then we can employ anthropological methods used for the analysis of cultural transfer by immigrant societies to the Philistines. However, even more relevant to our case is the examination of the processes that affect the immigrant society within its host society, and the manner in which these processes are represented in

the material culture (as the issue of identifying the exact geographical origin or origins of the Philistines will not be embarked upon here). Various modern examples show how the process of transfer of material culture associated with immigrants is highly selective (e.g., Cameron 1995; Chapman 1997; see Burmeister 2000: 541–2, and more references therein). The selection criteria are adaptive to the new environment – including the ethnic, religious and socio-economic composition of the immigrant group, and the impact of the hosting cultures (e.g., Ostergen 1988). The immigrants create their own hybrid culture (Burmeister 2000: 546). Yet, defining the process of cultural changes that the immigrant society undergoes is highly complex and problematic in archaeological examples (as shown by Burmeister 2000: 548–52, in an example of German migration to Britain during the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD). In describing process that the Philistines underwent in developing towards the Iron Age II, various terms have been used: *assimilation* (Dothan 1982, 1998c; Bunimovitz 1990), *acculturation* (Stone 1995), *creolization* (Ben-Shlomo, Shai and Maeir 2004) and *fusion* (Uziel 2007). The various terms define different levels of interaction between the original immigrant culture and the host culture, and the end product or the newly formed culture. While it is agreed by all that a new culture develops as an outcome of this interaction, its nature is disputed: in ‘assimilation’ the original immigrant culture complete concedes to the host culture; in ‘acculturation’ there are certain elements left, while in ‘creolization’ and ‘fusion’ the new culture combines both elements and creates a new cultural entity.

Although these distinctions are not always easily detectable in archaeological material (which is fragmentary by nature), in the case of iconographic representations in Philistia, the third option (of creolization or fusion) is preferable. As noted above, the development of style in Philistia during the Iron Age brought about a certain regional style, especially in terracottas, that combined elements from both Aegean and Canaanite/Levantine traditions. Thus, although there is still insufficient evidence to reconstruct this process, the following scenario can be proposed (see also Yasur-Landau 2002, 2003). In the initial stage, groups of immigrants from the west arrived in Philistia; this was probably a gradual process in which ‘pioneer’ groups came first to survey the new land, with larger groups following. At this stage, the immigrants did not control Philistia politically, nor were they a socio-economic elite, yet, they preserved their own traditions. This was mostly in the private domain, in the form of pottery decoration and terracottas that were made in the Aegean style, probably by immigrant potters. The influence of the Canaanite tradition was always present, and probably intensified over time, both as a result of intermarriage, and at a later stage, in the search for political influence, as the immigrants gained strength. The immigrants increased interaction as they sought integration with the local elements and, thus, had a stronger motivation to incorporate elements of the Canaanite traditions (but without actively abandoning all of their own traditions). This may have been especially true of certain power and cult symbols, in the stage when the immigrant population gained strength and self confidence. Such a process,

in which immigrant groups are more conservative regarding their otherness during the initial stage, is termed 'opposition' and has been identified in various historical examples (see, e.g., Spicer 1971; McGuire 1982); symbols and iconographic representations are an important component for the maintenance of ethnic boundaries, and thus can contribute to this 'opposition' (McGuire 1982: 161). Possibly, at a later stage, the Philistines felt less need to zealously and faithfully preserve their own traditions from their homeland in the form of specific iconographic depictions on objects used in the home (such as pottery and terracottas). In this way, a new Philistine culture was created.

Another phenomenon is the persistence and relative abundance of depictions representing the typical Canaanite tradition during the Iron Age II. This is especially illustrated by the large amount of figurative terracottas of the late Iron Age I and Iron Age IIA–B from Ekron, Tel Qasile, Yavneh and Ashdod. Philistia may have become a sort of 'enclave' for the prosperity of the Canaanite figurative tradition (note, also that in the Hebrew Bible, the Philistines and Canaanites are often mentioned together, e.g., Judg. 3:3). This may have been a result of the Philistine attitudes towards other traditions, as the immigrant population in Philistia with its Aegean background created a more favorable climate for these traditions, as opposed to the Israelite aniconic ideology, as well as the possible diminishing of Mesopotamian anthropomorphism (see, e.g., Ornan 2005), which influenced other regions of the southern Levant (particularly Judah). This is also attested to by the existence (at least according to Assyrian accounts) of life-size anthropomorphic statues of the Philistine/Canaanite gods displayed in the Gaza and Ashkelon temples (see, above, fig. 3.51; e.g., Uehlinger 1997: 124–8, figs. 45–6; Uehlinger 2002). Also, both on account of its location and due to possible political reasons, the region of Philistia had a stronger connection to Egypt and was therefore more influenced by its southwestern neighbor. This may also have counter-balanced the northern influences elsewhere, associated with the Aramean, Assyrian and later, Babylonian empires.

#### *4.2. The meaning behind the images: can we define a Philistine symbolism?*

The symbolism associated with the various iconographic depictions and its relation to the function of the objects they appear on is indeed a complex matter, especially in archaeology (see Chapter 1). This symbolism may be related to ethnicity and cultural messages transmitted in a given society (e.g., Bahrani 2005: 52–3), to power symbolism generating elite control (e.g., Porada 1968; Schmitt 2001; Feldman 2002; Feldman and Heinz 2007), or to cultic and religious myths, symbols and ideologies (e.g., Keel and Uehlinger 1998; Bahrani 2003). On the other hand, the option of (at least some of) these depictions being decorative elements of functional objects, depictions of daily life or secular objects (e.g. toys or models) cannot be disregarded

as well. This issue is especially relevant for depiction on ceramic objects, a cheap and relatively common medium (which constitutes most of the depictions in this assemblage).

Renfrew (1985: 1–26), in his discussion on cult and the meaning of cult objects in antiquity, mentions several definitions of religion and points out that cultic ceremony, civil ceremony and games may all appear similar to the outside observer. Clearly, distinguishing between these possibilities on the basis of the archaeological record alone is difficult (Renfrew 1985: 15). Yet, he correctly points out the importance of recurrent motifs or practices, which should have more significant religious or ideological value for those producing and consuming them. Thus, when discussing the Philistine iconographic assemblage, we should search for recurrent depictions in order to define a ‘Philistine symbolism’; such a symbolism may be connected to religious beliefs or common ethnic symbols brought by the immigrants from their homeland. As suggested above (and see also Yasur-Landau 2008), the symbol of the bird may be a good candidate and will be discussed below. It should be noted, however, that in order to understand or attempt to reconstruct a system of symbols one usually utilizes complete compositions, scenes and narratives. Regretfully, these are very rare in the Philistine material culture, and in most cases we are forced to deal with isolated or fragmentary motifs; hence, our ability to reconstruct this system is naturally limited. Nevertheless, according to the style and appearance of the different main themes (female, bull, lion, bird etc.) in iconographic representations in Philistia, as discussed in Chapter 3, it is possible to suggest a favorable classification or association of each theme with either the Philistine-Aegean tradition, Canaanite tradition, or combination of the two (summarized in table 3).

The Aegean-style *female figurines* in Philistia may be interpreted in various ways. They can be seen as representing goddesses, priestesses, devotees, or as votives. It has been suggested that the seated figurines should be identified as goddesses seated on a throne (Yasur-Landau 2001), in accordance with various Aegean depictions of a similar type of goddess (Nilsson 1968: 350–51; Rehak 1995: 106, 116–17). Similar seated figures appear on a cylinder seal from Ashdod (fig. 3.14), and possibly on a krater from Ashkelon (fig. 3.12, as suggested in Yasur-Landau 2008); again, one can mention the seated goddesses from later Assyrian depictions (fig. 3.51) possibly representing statues looted from the Iron Age II Gaza temple. The meaning of these objects and their symbolic world would thus be clearly cultic, possibly related to the important or even principal role that the seated female image (an ‘enthroned goddess’, queen goddess or ‘mother goddess’) played in Aegean society and cult (Rehak 1995). There is sufficient evidence that proves that these are depictions of deities rather than worshipers or priestesses, on account of the regal posture on the throne and the Aegean iconography depicting similar seated women being attended to by other figures (Press 2007: 213–6; Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: 64–7). The ‘Ashdoda’ figurines have been interpreted as goddesses in several studies dealing with Philistine cult and religion (Singer 1992; Schmitt 1999: 635–43; Mazar 2000; Yasur-

Landau 2001), although the identity of this goddess has not been agreed upon. While T. Dothan (1982: 234), Mazar (2000: 223), and Yasur-Landau (2001, 2008) have stressed its Aegean identity, Brug proposed a Canaanite origin (1985: 186) and Sherratt suggested a connection with the cult of sailors and merchants of the eastern Mediterranean (1998: 306–8). Singer, meanwhile, suggested a connection to the Anatolian Kybele/Kubaba (Singer 1992). Given the iconographic depiction – a seated and clothed figure – the Aegean source is most probable.

Table 3. Suggested classification of the main iconographic themes in Philistia

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Aegean</i>	<i>Aegean and/or Canaanite adopted into Philistine style</i>	<i>Important Late Bronze Canaanite continuing in Iron Age</i>	<i>Secondary Canaanite motif popular in Philistia</i>	<i>Secondary Canaanite motif</i>	<i>Iron Age II Canaanite/Phoenician/Judean</i>
Standing clothed female	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Seated clothed female	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Standing nude female	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Standing drummer female	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Seated/standing male	No	?	Yes?	No	?	No
Bull	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Lion	Secondary	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Horse/donkey	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Horse and rider	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Bird	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
Ibex	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Fish	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Tree	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Pomegranate	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No

It has been suggested that since standing female and bovine figurines appear in large quantities in the Aegean, they must represent votive offerings (e.g., Rousioti 2001: 309) rather than deities. While it may be true that bovine

figurines substitute or depict sacrificial animals, it seems that the standing females with upraised arms are more likely to depict goddesses, possibly the same deity as the seated figures (Press 2007: 185–95; Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009: 66). The appearance of large sized Psi-like figures in the Argolid (e.g., Asine: Frödin and Persson 1938: fig. 206; Tiryns: Kilian 1978: 461, 465, figs. 17, 20–21; 1981a; Mycenae: Moore and Taylour 1999: 89–101) and the depiction of seated females with the same upraised arm postures (as at Aghia Triada, Crete: Rethemiotake 1998: 172, pl. 8:a; and the mainland: Mylonas 1956) support the connections.

The Philistine immigrants arriving in Philistia during the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE are likely to have origins in the LH IIIC Aegean post-palatial society. As the specific function of the Aegean-style figurines in Philistia (according to the limited contextual evidence available so far) seems to be of domestic cultic use, the appearance of the Psi-type and ‘Ashdoda’ figurines in Philistine houses implies that certain Aegean religious practices were similarly carried out by these immigrants.<sup>61</sup> Thus, the similarities in the form of figurines found in the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE in the Aegean, Cyprus, and Philistia may reflect a significant connection between these populations during this period.

As noted above, *birds* seem to be important in Philistine iconography, frequently depicted in connection with the Philistines: on pottery, as bird vessels, rattles, on ceramic ‘bird-bowls’, and on the bows of the Sea Peoples’ ships in the Medinet Habu reliefs (fig. 3.50; see, e.g., Dothan 1982: 227; Wachsmann 2000). In the Minoan and Mycenaean cultures, the bird motif can represent the actual presence of the goddess (see, e.g., Yasur-Landau 2008: 217–8), and thus, the Philistine birds may have had additional religious importance (possibly even when appearing as decorations on tableware). It therefore seems quite likely that the birds were indeed a Philistine ‘ethnic symbol’, due to its use as an Aegean religious symbol, or in relation to their importance in sea navigation, or simply as a spinoff of the importance of birds in the Aegean iconography, without any specific meaning. The bird motif also appears in cosmetic ivory boxes as well as ceramic ‘bird bowls’; although these are in essence Egypto-Canaanite objects by nature, they may have been selected by the Philistines due to their inclination towards the bird motif. The appearance of these items in the Tel Qasile temple may possibly be related to this phenomenon.

The *pomegranate* appears relatively frequently in figurative pottery in Iron Age Philistia and may have carried a special meaning to the Philistines, possibly related to the female goddess, whether it was used as a feminine symbol in general or as one specifically associated with their own goddess (such as

<sup>61</sup> Isolated imported LH IIIA–B female and bovine figurines from LBII contexts, which are scattered at various sites and within Canaanite shrines, do not indicate such activities, with the religious meaning of these items likely ignored, and their presence a result of the desire to display exotic artifacts (Petrovic 2004).



the Anatolian Kubaba, e.g. Rova 2008). Yet, it should be remembered that this is a rather common Levantine (and Israelite) motif as well (see above).

The motif of the *fish* may also have had special significance; Singer suggested that the main Philistine god Dagon is related to the fish (recalling the Hebrew *dag*, Singer 1992). As this motif is rare, only occasionally appearing on pottery vessels and seals, its importance to the Philistine symbolic world requires further study; yet, as noted above, it may be included in the Philistine ensemble of marine symbols. Generally, it has been suggested that certain components of the Philistine material culture (primarily the decorated pottery) carry symbolic value and are instrumental for asserting the group identity of the early Philistines (e.g., Bunimovitz and Faust 2001; Sharon 2001, regarding the decorated pottery; see also Yasur-Landau 2005; Ben-Shlomo et al. 2008 regarding foodways); other components may not have had such symbolic importance. In this regard, the geometric decorative motifs on pottery having maritime connotations, such as spirals and streamers, which possibly depicting waves in the sea, should be mentioned (as well as several depictions of ships); the bird, fish and wavy motifs together may have formed an 'iconographic ensemble' that the Philistines chose to display in the southern Levant, through which they expressed their cultural singularity and origin.

The predominant role of *bull* depictions could have had religious meaning, as depictions of deities or their vehicles, or sacrificial symbols, possibly serving as containers for the sacrificed animal's blood (and, thereby deriving their shape and significance, see Cassimatis 1973; Marinatos 1986; Hägg 1990: 183). They may also however be interpreted on more general terms, as symbols of fertility, power or well being. The role of bulls in religion and cult practices is well acknowledged in many cultures, including Canaan (e.g., Mazar 1982; Flemming 1999), Egypt (e.g., Rice 1998: 116–52), Cyprus (Loulloupis 1979; Rice 1998: 237–50) and the Aegean (e.g., Nilsson 1927: 140–61; Rice 1998: 198–219). The possible religious symbolic meaning behind bovine vessels (or other figurative objects for that matter) may be in the depiction of a deity, divine creature, or the incarnation of a deity (Loulloupis 1979: 215–16; for example, the Egyptian Hathor or Apis bulls, Hornung 1982: 109–13, Rice 1998: 144–5). Yet, it is more likely that metal or other precious media would be used for zoomorphic vessels, figurines or large figures of this type. Another possibility is that the animal depicted is sacred, and is linked to a deity or mythological story. A zoomorphic vessel could also have served as a sacrificial substitute, votive offering or symbol. This would account for the larger number of simpler figurines or vessels. Clay cow figurines were probably used in this manner in various Hathor temples in Egypt and Sinai (Pinch 1993: 162–3, fig. 1:21–34) and in peak sanctuaries in Crete (e.g., Hayden 1991; Peatfield 1992).

While several Egyptian deities are depicted as animals, this phenomenon is less known in the Mesopotamian, Canaanite or Aegean religions. The bull is a particularly dominant animal in Canaanite, Mesopotamian, Egyptian,

Cypriote and Aegean religion, although it usually serves as a vehicle for the god (e.g., the weather god).<sup>62</sup> It seems that part of the bull's symbolism (as well as other domesticated animals) is associated with the perception of its fertility and might, while its use may also be linked to its agricultural-economic importance. This symbolism, implied by the recurrence of the harness design on bovine vessels (e.g., figs. 3.55:1–2, 3.58–3.59, possibly also on figurines, figs. 3.52–3.53), may place them in a domestic, economic domain rather than a mythical, religious one.

The cultic symbolism of the *lion* is naturally stronger, as this a rare and wild animal. The importance of the lion in the Near East (including Canaan and the southern Levant during the second and first millennia BCE), as a religious symbol, as well as one of political power is well known and has been extensively studied (e.g., Yadin 1985; Beck 1994, 2000; Schmitt 2001: 121–6). This symbolism is apparent during the Iron Age I and II and has significant representations in Philistia, mostly from head cups and cultic stands. Similarly, and possibly even more important is the symbolism of the tree and the horned animals connected to it. The nude female, also in relation to the above themes, is another important Canaanite theme. It appears that all of these symbols are evident in the cultic assemblage of Philistia (see table 3), especially during the Iron Age II.

In contrast to libation vessels, figurines are well within the symbolic realm as they do not have a direct functional use. They can be interpreted as 'secular' toys, ornaments or amulets, foundation deposits, witchcraft objects, or objects with a more religious nature, such as sacrificial substitutes, votives, symbolic deities or mythological figures. Anthropomorphic figurines are more easily associated with religion and cult (see, e.g., Kletter 2001 and Van der Toorn 2002 for the Israelite Iron Age II figures and references therein). As already noted, the Aegean-style female figurines probably had a similar meaning during the Iron Age I as their prototypes in the Aegean and Cyprus, while during the Iron Age II there is a possible merger between the Aegean and Canaanite religious elements (Singer 1992; Yasur-Landau 2001). A cultic interpretation for the undecorated zoomorphic figurines is less clear; wild and domesticated animals are part of everyday life and therefore may have been portrayed in clay as children's toys or as game pieces. Prehistoric descriptions of animals are sometimes considered as 'positive magic' or shamanism, associated with success in hunting expeditions (Schmandt-Besserat 1997).

<sup>62</sup> A fine example of a bull incarnation of a deity is the Egyptian Hathor or Apis bulls (Hornung 1982:109–13; Rice 1998: 144–5). During the Bronze and Iron Ages, the bull is often related to both the weather god Adad and the moon god Sin (Ornan 2001a, 2001b). The bull is also associated with El or Ba'al, the head of the Canaanite pantheon (Mazar 1982: 32). This could have been the background of the story of the golden calf in the biblical Exodus narrative (Exod. 32:1–6), and the general importance of the bull in the Israelite religion (e.g., Miller 2000: 63–4; see also the description of the heavenly creatures in Ez. 1:5–12 mentioning the faces of a bull, lion and eagle).

In other cases, animal depictions are symbols of a certain social, religious or ethnic identity (see, e.g., Soderberg 2002, for an example from later antiquity). While in very early periods, when people were hunters-gatherers, this may have been considered 'public cult practices', during the Iron Age we tend to classify similar symbolism as a more domestic and secular behavior. It is possible that figurines of animals with high economic value were collected within the home, in hope of continued, renewed or newly-found prosperity.<sup>63</sup> Zoomorphic terracottas may have been used as sacrificial substitutes or votive offerings as well, whether in public cultic contexts, or in cultic corners within the home. They may also have been used as foundation deposits. This would account for the large number of crude figurines or vessels found. Nevertheless, the same object could have different roles, at one time being a sacrificial substitute in a religious ceremony and in another case a toy or an ornament. For example, a rise in the economic importance of bovines would be reflected in both possible uses of the figurines. Therefore, once again, their symbolic meaning as well as the function of most terracottas depicting animals (and several of the human ones as well) can only be (possibly) determined by the primary context of the object.

#### *4.3. Iconography, cult and the domestic sphere in Philistia*

Two types of assemblages of iconographic representations in Philistia can be defined: a domestic assemblage and a public/cultic one. It seems that the domestic assemblage, especially in the earlier portion of the Iron Age I, includes much more Aegean-style depictions. This dichotomy discloses certain aspects of Philistine society in the Iron Age.

Over the last three decades, several studies have dealt with the analysis of migration processes and their reflection in the archaeological record (see, e.g., McGuire 1982; Anthony 1990; Anthony 1992; Burmeister 2000; Yasur-Landau 2002, 2003, 2007; Sherratt 2002, 2008). The evidence from the household and domestic sphere has been shown to be especially important in relation to the characteristics and mechanisms of migration and the behavior of immigrant populations in both anthropological (e.g., Boyd 1989; Zimmerer 2004) and archaeological (e.g., Burmeister 2000: 542–7) case studies. Studies have shown that the material culture discovered in domestic contexts is more sensitive to the arrival of new immigrants than the one represented by public, monumental and officially religious structures (e.g., Berry 1997: 12; Antony 2000).

<sup>63</sup> In modern Bolivia, for example, models of houses, motor vehicles and other valuable objects are presented to the priest for blessing. Thus, the believer's property will be acquired or protected. An Iron Age animal-shaped figurine may have served the same purpose.

Several scholars have described the arrival of the Philistines in the southern Levant very dramatically, with the Aegean or Cypriote culture of these people imposed on the region of the southern coast of Israel by military force (for example, Stager describes two waves of a coordinated attack of the coast in a 'D-Day'-like event, Stager 1991: 35, Stager 1995; Barako 2000 described a massive sea borne migration). Furthermore, Trude and Moshe Dothan depicted the Philistines as the new rulers of Philistia from the initial stage of their arrival, bringing with them their system of government revolving around city-state alliances (e.g., Dothan and Dothan 1992; Dothan 1982: 17–20; see also Finkelstein 2002, who emphasizes the military aspect of the Philistines depicted in the Hebrew Bible, although dating it to the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE). Here, the assumption of a more gradual settlement in Philistia in the initial phase is suggested, with the reconstruction of Philistine migration along the lines of a more 'typical' immigrant society. An accumulation of immigrants divided in some way between the five major cities (and possibly smaller sites) would undoubtedly have a significant effect on the society and material culture of Philistia.<sup>64</sup> A gradual and possibly more peaceful migration process seems to be indicated by most archaeological evidence from Philistia thus far (see Bunimovitz 1999; Yasur-Landau 2002, 2003, 2007; Ben-Shlomo 2007). Moreover, it seems that an 'integration' strategy rather than a 'separation' strategy was undertaken by the immigrants following their initial arrival (Yasur-Landau 2003). When, and how (if at all) the Philistines managed to establish themselves as a social and political elite in Philistia in the Iron Age is still an obscure issue, due to the lack of clear-cut archaeological evidence, or any textual evidence. Even if this process occurred at a very early date, eventually a narrative of interaction with the local native culture is evident, all the way through to the end of the Iron Age in Philistia. This is evident both from analysis of the material culture, alongside the textual evidence.

Therefore, the examination of several elements of domestic material culture uncovered in the households of Iron Age I Philistia can clearly be valuable for further evaluation of the Philistine phenomenon and its characteristics. Various modern examples show how immigrants are more faithful to their homeland practices in their private domain, yet conform more with the host culture in the public domain (see, e.g., Ostergen 1988; Burmeister 2000).

As noted above, the Aegean-style female figurines, as well as most of the Aegean-style bovine figurines and other terracottas were found in domestic

<sup>64</sup> A time span of 20–25 years may not be identifiable in archaeological terms, though the very earliest phase in the INE acropolis of Ekron attests to such a phase of very 'low key' Philistine evidence (Killebrew 1998: 381–3; Gitin et al. 2006: 30–33, Phase 9D). Note, this gradual phase could in theory lower the date of the beginning of the Philistine culture by a decade or two, but not by a substantial 70 years or more as suggested by others (see, e.g., Finkelstein 2000), as such a gap is not evident in the Philistine cities (see Ben-Shlomo 2006a: 76–8).

contexts (see above, section 3.5). On the other hand, Canaanite-style female figurines hardly appear in Philistine domestic contexts during the early Iron Age, and it seems that the Aegean-style figurines may have replaced them in domestic cult. Later, during the Iron Age II, these reappear in increasing quantities, while the Aegean-style figurines only continue to appear at Ashdod. Animal depictions are dominated by bull depictions, mostly libation vessels and kernoi, which are more common during the Iron Age II. Especially common are the bovine libation vessels of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE at Ekron. Occasionally, horse/donkey depictions appear on figurines or libation vessels (although horse figurines are more common in Iron Age II Ashkelon). These vessels appear in domestic and industrial contexts, as well as open areas. Lion depictions are more erratic, appearing more in temples as head cups (see below). Birds appear mostly on Philistine decorated pottery, but also as vessels (Aegean style, hybrid-Philistine style and fewer Canaanite); these are also typical of domestic contexts. Some of the more affluent houses have yielded ivories, carrying mostly Egyptian-style depictions, as well as several seals and seal impressions. The latter reflect an Egyptian or Canaanite iconographic syntax.

Most of the Iron Age I undecorated zoomorphic figurines, which usually depict bulls, were found in domestic contexts or open areas. However, many of these do not seem to come from primary depositions or discards, and it is difficult to reconstruct their use within the house. Nevertheless, in most cases they do not seem to be concentrated in 'cultic' corners or niches. Cypriot and Aegean undecorated zoomorphic figurines are similar to the Philistine ones in terms of clay type, soot marks, modeling of the details (the pinching technique and the incisions) and the type of animals represented, including mostly bovines, although other species as well. These figurines may represent domestic cult or other symbolic practices, maybe of a voodoo-like or 'sympathetic witchcraft' nature. If so, they would be characteristic of post-palatial society in the Aegean and in the eastern Mediterranean, occurring also in the main urban sites and not only in remote peak sanctuaries. The cult possibly represented by these figurines is different from that which is related to the LH IIIB palatial 'hearth-*wanax*' religious ideology (Kilian 1988; Wright 1995), which is very centralized and homogenized, with most rituals and paraphernalia occurring in major shrines (see, e.g., Kilian 1990: 195–8; Hägg 1995). On the other hand, the basic appearance of this type of zoomorphic figurine in the Aegean (particularly in the mainland) may represent Iron Age influences from Cyprus or the Levant to the west, as while these figurines are common in Philistia in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE, they are essentially rooted in earlier periods in the Levant. In this case, the customs may have developed independently in Cyprus and Philistia, perhaps as a result of interactions with local traditions, and then somehow influenced their peers in the Greek mainland. In any case, the appearance of both the Aegean-style and undecorated zoomorphic figurines, together with certain foodways (Ben-Shlomo et al. 2008) in Philistia, Cyprus and the Aegean may

indicate a continuous communication, or a 'koine', between the populations of these regions, attested to in the domestic material culture.

#### *4.4. Iconography in temples and public contexts in Philistia*

To date, several Iron Age cultic contexts were excavated in Philistia, however, most are not in the five pentapolis cities. These include a possible early Iron Age I cultic room in Ekron Field INE (see Dothan 2003a), the temples of Tel Qasile (Mazar 1980) and the newly excavated temple at Nahal Patish (P. Nahshoni, personal communication). Building 350 at Ekron was also defined as a temple on several occasions (e.g., Dothan 2003a) but its architecture and finds are not clearly indicative of this identification (see, e.g., Mazow 2005) and is therefore here treated as a public building. In addition, an apsidal structure from Ashdod, Area H, Stratum XII (Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: plan. 2.5, fig. 2.16) may also be a candidate for a cultic room on account of its peculiar shape, yet it was found nearly empty of finds. From the Iron Age II there is now more evidence: the favissa from Yavneh (Kletter, Ziffer and Zwickel 2006; Ziffer and Kletter 2007), a cultic corner from Gath (A. Maeir, personal communication), Temple-Palace Complex 650 from Ekron (e.g., Gitin 1998; Gitin 2003) and a possible cultic room or small temple from Ashdod, Area D (Dothan 1971: Room 1010). A possible cultic corner from Area K (Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005: Room 6212, fig. 2.48) should also be considered.

The temple at Nahal Patish ('Mifgash Hanehalim' site) has not yet been published, however, a few details are mentioned here as communicated by the excavator Pirhiya Nahshoni of the Israel Antiquities Authority (Nahshoni 2009). The site excavated is a small rural site of 12 dunam (1.2 hectares), dating to the late Iron Age I. Its date and plan are similar to the Tel Qasile temples of Strata XI–X (giving basis for the interpretation of the building's function). The structure is an asymmetric L-shaped building. The entrance leads to a courtyard, which housed repository pits (favissa) and an altar; one figurative burner was found here, as well as spools (cylindrical loom weights). From the courtyard there are two passages: to the right there is an entrance to a square store room with a pit/favissa (which yielded cooking vessels) and other vessels and cooking pots; to the left, there is an indirect entrance to the temple's cela. This room includes stone benches, a stepped *bamah* and a rubble standing stone *matzeva*; near the *bamah* two jars, two rounded stands, a strainer spouted jug (of an early LPDW decorative style), a bronze knife, and gold foil pieces were found. Outside the courtyard, another small rectangular structure was excavated with a pebbled floor; here an intact lion-head cup was found. Above the temple (defined as Stratum II), a Stratum I structure with pillar bases seems to be built above the temple, ending its use.



Thus, a large-scale Iron Age I Philistine temple has yet to be identified in the Philistine cities, with the example from Tel Qasile lying in the very northern edge of the area defined here as Philistia. From the Iron Age II, we have a temple favissa and small cultic corners; while the 650 temple at Ekron exhibits strong Assyrian influence (Gitin 1998) and may not be a typical 'Philistine' temple (if such a definition could at all fit the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE). Yet, all these Iron Age II are clearly cultic contexts, with the need to carefully examine the iconographic representations recovered there (table 4, and section 3.5 above). Important to note is the lack of monumental depictions in the archaeological finds. Most finds come from favissae, which include used, relatively low value terracotta items; otherwise, several cultic vessels, usually rather small, and often made of clay, related to libation, are found in situ. If more valuable and larger items existed, then they must have been removed when the structures went out of use (as depicted, possibly, on the Assyrian procession of looted statues, fig. 3.51, Uehlinger 1997: 111; a possible exception to this may be the few large ivories from Complex 650 at Ekron). The cultic contexts contain no Aegean-style female or zoomorphic terracottas for that matter. Generally, figurines are rare in these contexts. A group of six or seven fragments of undecorated animal figurines were found in or near a room in Field INE at Ekron Stratum V (Dothan 2003a: 208, fig. 17; Ben-Shlomo 1999) which is interpreted as a cultic room. The appearance of bird/fish motifs in these contexts is also minor.

Building 350 in Ekron, which may be a public building of some sort, but probably not a temple, contained several figurative objects. These include a Canaanite-style ivory head, an ivory lid with an Aegean-style scene, an Egyptian-style monkey statue, a kernos with ibexes, a pomegranate vessel and several fragments of bovine and other zoomorphic kernoï. This is indeed quite a diversified assemblage (Dothan 1998b), although the local Levantine stylistic components seem to be dominant, with the Aegean-style lid possibly seen as an 'exotic' item.

Canaanite-style human depictions are not very common, but do appear a few times at Tel Qasile (as a hybrid-type anthropomorphic libation vessel, a stand with dancers and a mask), on several of the Yavneh stands (with an iconography that carries some Philistine traits – see above) and once at Complex 650 at Ekron. Most depictions are female. Bird depictions are rare, appearing only at Tel Qasile in the form of bird bowls made of pottery and ivory, and rarely at other sites, with very few depictions on pottery. They are absent from the Yavneh assemblage, although they occur on a kernos from the cultic corner at Gath. Bulls and especially lions appear more consistently at Tel Qasile, Ekron, Yavneh and Nahal Patish cultic contexts of both Iron Age I and II. Other Canaanite motifs, such as the palm tree are common, at Yavneh, while pomegranates appear at Ekron, Tel Qasile and Gath. Note, that nearly all of these items and motifs also appear in domestic contexts (see table 4).

Table 4. Comparison between iconographic representations in domestic and cultic contexts in Philistia\*

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Domestic</i>	<i>Ekron#</i>	<i>Ashdod#</i>	<i>Qasile*</i>	<i>Yavneh*</i>	<i>Patish*</i>	<i>Gath*</i>	<i>Ekron* 650</i>
Aegean-style female	+	?	-	-	-	-	-	-
Aegean-style birds	+	?	-	few	-	-	-	-
Other Aegean-style	+	few	-	?	-	-	-	-
Canaanite/Levantine female	Iron II	ivory	-	hybrid	hybrid	-	-	+
Other human	Iron II	-	-	+	few	+	-	-
Bull (Canaanite)	+	+	-	few	+	-	+	+
Lion	few	+	-	+	+	+	-	+
Horse	few	-	-	?	?	-	-	-
Bird (other)	+	?	-	+bird bowls	-	-	+	-
Palm tree	few	-	-	few	+	-	-	-
Pomegranate	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	-
Egyptian motifs	+	+	-	few	-	-	-	+
Other depictions	+	+	knobbed stands	figurative stands	architecture		phallus?	-

\*Note: 'domestic' is defined as all non-public/cultic contexts; \* = cultic; # = possibly cultic (defined as cultic corners, temples and public buildings). Note also that the evidence from many of these contexts is not extensively published (Ekron, Patish and Gath) and is thus provisional.

Zoomorphic libation vessels are found in Philistine cultic contexts, although, unlike Tel Qasile (Mazar 1980), are usually not present in large quantities. These are in fact quite rare in distinctive Late Bronze and Iron Age sanctuaries in Canaan. The Late Bronze-Early Iron Age temples at Megiddo (Loud 1948: 102–5), and the Fosse Temple at Lachish (Tufnell, Inge and Harding 1940) lack animal-shaped vessels. This is in contrast to the Aegean region, where zoomorphic vessels and figures appear in sanctuaries, for example at Mycenae (Moore and Taylour 1999), Phylakopi (French 1985) and Tiryns Unterburg (Kilian 1981). During this time span, zoomorphic bovine vessels in the Levant are more commonly found in burials (e.g. Beth Shemesh, Gezer, Lachish and Minet el-Beida – see Gershuny 1991 for an overview). This fact may indicate that the relative abundance of zoomorphic vessels from Philistia (even if they are not in Aegean forms and mostly in domestic contexts) may reflect an Aegean or Cypriot influence, that did not penetrate

into the official public cult and remained mostly in domestic contexts. The bovine vessel found in Temple Complex 650 at Ekron may indicate a new, 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE phenomenon.

Thus, one can hardly reconstruct Aegean or Cypriote affiliated cultic practices (at least according to specific paraphernalia) in the temples and cultic contexts identified thus far in Philistia. The typical 'ethnic' symbol of the bird does not play a significant role in these contexts, and Canaanite cultic symbols such as the palm tree and possibly the lion and bull are dominant. Apparently, most iconographic symbolism carrying Aegean or western figurative content is thus far limited to the domestic domain. Nevertheless, it should be noted that a goddess of a probable Aegean name (*Ptgyh*, possibly related to the Aegean *Potnia*, meaning 'the lady') is mentioned in the royal inscription found in the cella of the large temple complex of Iron Age IIC Ekron (Gitin, Dothan and Naveh 1997; Demsky 1997; Schäfer-Lichtenberger 2000). Thus, the Aegean deities or later variants thereof were not forgotten, although they may have been worshipped in a more local, Levantine manner. From the evidence currently available (biblical narrative, Assyrian reliefs and texts, and inscriptions and figurative representations from Philistia – see above) it seems that during the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, the Philistines worshipped a combination of deities, some Aegean and others, the common Canaanite deities, such as Ba'al and Asherah (for Ekron, see Dothan and Gitin 1993: 1058; Gitin 1993; Gitin and Cogan 1999; Stern 2001: 120–29; Gitin 2003).

#### 4.5. *Iconography, administration and power in Philistia*

The archaeological evidence directly related to the issue of political power and administration in Philistia during the Iron Age is quite limited. Textual evidence, especially for the early Iron Age, is mostly biblical, with questionable historical reliability. The relationship between iconography and power in the ancient Near East (and other regions, e.g., DeMarrais et al. 1996; Robb 1998) has been discussed on numerous occasions (see, e.g., Porada 1968; Schmitt 2001; Feldman 2002; Suter and Uehlinger 2005; Feldman and Heinz 2007). In most cases, these issues relate to either monumental iconographic depictions, depictions on precious materials or to objects directly related to written or administrative items. Only the latter two groups are present in the assemblage of Iron Age Philistia, and not in high quantities. These include depictions on ivories (precious materials), and depictions on seals and seal impression (possible having a relationship with administration).

Apparently, iconographic representations appearing on ivory objects and on stamp seals from Philistia do not usually represent the peculiar 'otherness' of the Philistines or their ethnic origin (Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: 27–8; Ben-Shlomo 2006c: 146–7; Ben-Shlomo 2008c). Aegean or Cypriot affiliated motifs hardly appear in these mediums. Most depictions on ivory

are either Egyptian or Canaanite in style, continuing the Late Bronze Age tradition (Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006).

The Iron Age I *glyptics* from Philistia very often show a local style, which was developed in the southern Levant during the early Iron Age, or various Egyptian motifs (Ben-Shlomo 2006c). Note, however, that the alleged 'Cypro-Minoan' script found on an ostrakon and jar handles from Ashkelon that were recently published (Cross and Stager 2006) may indicate a different scenario, at least for Ashkelon. The stamped sealings uncovered thus far from Philistia, which can be associated more strongly with administration than the seals themselves (as these could have been used as mere amulets or for purposes other than administration), have no Aegean-affiliated motifs – only Canaanite or Egyptian ones. The sealings do reflect some sort of administration, whether on a small or large scale. Although the recovery of sealings in an excavation is highly dependent on chance, the character of the context excavated and the methodology of the excavation, this absence of evidence could still be an evidence of absence.

Several scenarios may explain the Canaanite monopoly on seal iconography: 1. The sealings sealed objects imported to Philistia from other regions, and were sealed and stamped outside Philistia (this may be examined in the future by petrographic analysis of the clay sealings). 2. Persons dealing with the administration in Philistia, who were responsible for impressing sealings, were of a non-Philistine origin, possibly Canaanites. 3. The Philistines themselves abided to the Canaanite traditions regarding the motifs used for impressions of sealings. In any case, this phenomenon indicates commercial and other contacts between the Philistine and Canaanite populations in Philistia, as the local iconographic syntax was understood by both sides. It is possible that the dominions of administration and writing as well as other traditional crafts such as ivory carving were still under the influence of local Canaanite and Egyptian traditions, or at least to a certain extent. Generally, there seems to be a transition to stamp seals in the southern Levant during the early Iron Age. At the same time, a new iconographic world of various combinations of animal and human motifs appears on the seals (Shuval 1990: 116). This phenomenon may be interpreted as a Levantine, Canaanite or may be an Israelite cultural process, possibly related to the rise of new and independent administrations and cultures in this period. Moreover, the stamp seals are more appropriate for bullae and sealing that were applied to sacks, boxes, vessels and papyri (rather than cylinder seals, which are more appropriate for impressing on tablets or jars).

The issue of Philistine *language and script* has been addressed on various occasions, though the archaeological data available is still quite meager (see, e.g., Singer 1994: 332–7; Kelm and Mazar 1995: 98–9; Sasson 1997; Yasur-Landau 2002: 231–4, 413). It seems that there is still no evidence that Aegean script was used on Philistine stamped sealings. Several words of Aegean etymology are related to the Philistines, such as *Seren*, *Goliath*, *Achish* (see Dothan 1982: 22–3; Singer 1994: 335–7; note also the non-

Semitic names from the late Iron Age II ostraca at Tell Jemmeh and Ashdod, Naveh 1989). Another possibly Aegean-related script may have been used on the tablet from Aphek (Kochavi 1990: no. XXIV; Gadot 2006: 27; Singer 2009) and at Ashkelon (Cross and Stager 2006). However, the assumptions revolving around the language spoken and written by the Philistines during the Iron Age I are still very speculative. During the Iron Age II the Philistines probably adopted a Semitic language quite similar to Hebrew as seen on various Semitic names associated with the late Philistines and the language used on various inscriptions from Philistia (see, Singer 1994: 336). Particularly important in this sense is the 7<sup>th</sup> century royal inscription from Ekron (Gitin, Dothan and Naveh 1997; Sasson 1997). It is possible that this adaptation indicates that the Aegean-type script did not play a central role in the Philistine administration during the subsequent phases of the Iron Age. This situation seems to coincide with the fact that Aegean-style figurines, or Aegean motifs (as the bird) do not appear thus far in either Iron Age I or Iron Age II temples and public buildings in Philistia (see above). In their stead we again see the traditional Canaanite symbols of power and religion (although these might have a 'Philistine' stylistic influence). The picture that arises, at least for the Iron Age I and IIA, is that Aegean-related or Philistine symbols of power did not play a significant role in the political discourse of Philistia. This fits well with the depiction of an immigrant society, involved in a process of integration and 'creolization' with the local society. During the Iron Age II, Aegean-style depictions are much more scarce, and naturally play an even a smaller role in this discourse. Yet, this does not indicate that the Philistine culture, including its 'Aegean' components, disappeared (as the name of an Aegean goddess from the Ekron inscription indicates), rather that the local iconography (with certain Philistine influence) and language was adopted by the late Philistines.

#### 4.6. *Summary*

Of the large and diversified assemblage of iconographic representations from Iron Age Philistia, the medium with the largest number of representations is probably figurative pottery and pottery decoration. These are represented mostly by figurines, zoomorphic libation vessels and various zoomorphic elements, such as kernos spouts, as well as pomegranate vessels. Human representations in this medium are not as common. In any case, monumental depictions are yet to be found. However, the evidence for iconographic representations in figurines and other terracottas from Philistia is now quite rich. These include human depictions, predominantly female, in greater quantity than on the figurative pottery. Aegean-style figurine types include the standing female Psi figurine and the seated 'Ashdoda' female figurines. These types also show a certain development throughout the Iron Age, similar to the decorated and figurative pottery. The standing female figurines probably

disappear in the later stages of the Iron Age, while the 'Ashdoda' seated figurine, which probably had a more important religious role in the Philistine cult, seems to persist in various forms until the late Iron Age at Ashdod. Aegean-style decorated bovine figurines have a more limited appearance in the earliest Iron I phases at Ekron. The only other type of figurine appearing in Iron Age I Philistia is the crude undecorated zoomorphic figurines, which depict bulls and occasionally other species. These figurines also have parallels in Cyprus and the Aegean and are probably related to the homeland culture of the Philistine immigrants. In addition, the bird motif is clearly of key significance in Philistine iconography. It is still yet to be seen whether the meaning of the bird symbol was ethnic (associated with the connection of birds to the sea and seamanship), religious (connected to, or as a symbol of an Aegean goddess), merely decorative (as a common Mycenaean motif), or a combination of any of these. The representations associated with the Aegean background of the Philistines are found in most cases in domestic contexts rather than in public or temple contexts. This indicates the significance of these depictions and the objects in which they are displayed in household cult practices of the Philistine immigrants.

Hence, there is a break in the representation of local or Canaanite types of figurines (mainly the nude female type) during Iron Age I Philistia, possibly reflecting a substantial, though temporary change in domestic cult practices. This break may not be evident in temples (although we do not have Iron Age I examples from the Philistine cities). Other types of non-Aegean terracottas together with the traditional 'Astarte' plaque figurines, also related to domestic cult, reappear in Philistia during the Iron Age II. The 'Musicians' stand', together with other figurines from Ashdod, as well as the recent important and rich assemblage from Yavneh, illustrate to a certain extent an iconographic style typical of Philistia. While certain Philistine or Aegeanized iconographic elements are still echoed in these representations, the subjects depicted are predominantly of Canaanite or local traditions (as the musicians' and their instruments, the women supporting their breasts, the tree motif etc.). Nevertheless, animal motifs popular in Iron Age I iconographic representations are still central in Iron Age II representations; these include the bull, lion and (to a lesser extent) the bird. Furthermore, the predominance of females in human representations (and possibly in zoomorphic ones as well) continues. Several of these elements are also important to the Canaanite culture (such as the bull and the lion). Therefore, the appearance of these elements alone cannot indicate whether a Canaanite or Philistine component of the culture is represented. It is suggested here that during the Iron Age II we have a combination of late Philistine and Canaanite iconographic elements evolving together, with an intensification of themes which are mutually appreciated by both cultures.

It seems that the Canaanite iconographic traditions are better preserved in Philistia than in other regions in the southern Levant. It may be that this part of the country was less influenced by elements, such as the Israelite



or Judahite cultures, or influences coming from the Aramean and Assyrian empires in the north, and various cultures of Transjordan in the east and Arabia from the south. Therefore, such an 'enclave' of Canaanite culture was made possible. However, the issue of different cultures and 'ethnic enclaves' in the Iron Age II southern Levant is complex and beyond the scope of this work, making this is a mere suggestion at this stage. However, one point that should be noted is the more abundant and complex figurative depictions characteristic of the Philistine material culture, as attested to by the material presented here — showing the wealth of style and symbolism. Whether this iconographic wealth and variability is indeed characteristic to Philistia alone is yet to be seen, as more iconographic material will be published from other Iron Age sites.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions

The Philistine archaeological phenomenon, as now almost completely agreed upon, represents the arrival of a new population from the Aegean and/or Cyprus to the southern coast of Israel during the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Much of the archaeological evidence from the Philistine cities excavated thus far seems to indicate that the Philistine society shared many attributes with any typical immigrant society, at least in its initial stages. Iconographic representations appearing in Philistine households may open an important window for understanding the characteristics of this society and processes that influenced its interaction with other local elements in the southern Levant. Iconography is perceived as a figurative depiction which carries artistic value, but can primarily be seen as a form of language, conveying social, ethnic, cultural, political, religious and ideological messages. Iconographic analysis undertakes the description and analysis of both the symbolic aspect of these messages (their content) and their stylistic aspect (the manner in which they are conveyed). Here this analysis was employed for the archaeological evidence from Iron Age Philistia. Both of these aspects were found to illuminate the Philistine society which created them. The material objects carrying these depictions in Philistia include various small finds, such as terracottas, ivory inlays and seals, as well as painted decorative motifs on pottery. The survey of iconographic representations in various media that appear in the archaeological record of Iron Age Philistia displays a rich and diversified assemblage.

From a stylistic point of view, several traditions can be identified. The Canaanite or Levantine style largely continues the tradition of iconography of the Late Bronze Age southern Levant, although exhibiting its own development during the Iron Age. The Aegean-style tradition is exclusive for Philistia and represents the new migrant population. These iconographic depictions show a style more faithful to the Aegean/Cypriote prototypes in the early stages of the Iron Age, appearing in a limited group of depictions. Later, this style absorbs various local influences, but, also develops independently into a new 'Philistine' style. Some of these types develop into a typical Philistine style which represents a mixture of Aegean, Cypriote, Canaanite and Egyptian elements. This process can be paralleled in the general development of the decorated Philistine pottery as described by T. Dothan and others over the last thirty years. This style still influences the iconography

of Philistia during the Iron Age IIA and beyond. By the end of the Iron Age, most stylistic components of iconographic depictions at Philistia can be considered Levantine, however a distinct regional iconographic style of Philistia may be defined (although relatively less material was published from this period thus far).

From a symbolic point of view, new characteristic themes are also introduced by the Aegean-style depictions. These especially include standing and seated female figurines, schematic clothed and similar to Late Helladic IIIC Mycenaean figurines. The motif of the bird, depicted in the Aegean style as pottery decoration, but also in other media, is noteworthy, and may be seen as a Philistine ethnic, cultural or religious symbol. Furthermore, other maritime themes, such as the fish and possibly wavy motifs and spirals can be seen in the same light. During the Iron Age IIA, several more complete depictions add scenes combining humans and animals, like the cultic stands of Yavneh and Ashdod. These are comprised of mostly female depictions and animals important in Levantine iconography – e.g. the bull and the lion – as well as other figurative themes (the ibex and palm tree). It seems that the Aegean and true Philistine motifs are restricted to domestic contexts, while temples and cultic corners are characterized by Canaanite motifs. Several types of media related to administration (e.g. seals) and precious materials (e.g. ivories) reflect a stronger influence of Egyptian motifs and the Canaanite style. The manifestation of ethnicity in the material culture, apparently, was not homogeneous and is highly dependent on the nature and function of each of its components.

It seems that during the Iron Age II, Philistia is relatively rich with figurative representations, mostly reflecting the Canaanite or Levantine style, which appear to intensify and develop, albeit with a distinct regional flavor. During the Iron Age, Philistia is probably a meeting point between various cultures and populations: the Philistine immigrants, the native Canaanites, the Israelites, and the Egyptians as well as other peoples. The fusion of these groups led to the wealth of the stylistic and symbolic world reflected in Philistine iconography. The development of iconographic representations in Iron Age Philistia seems to reflect such a reality quite well, in addition to displaying the typical development of an immigrant society, undergoing a process of integration and ‘creolization’ with the host cultures it encounters. The iconographic syntax which appeared in Philistia was apparently understood by both Canaanites and Philistines alike, leading to the eventual merging of these cultures, as indicated by the adaption of a Semitic language quite similar to Hebrew by the late Philistines. Iconographic representations and language in material culture are indeed a complex issue, and in this case, are part of the composite relationships between the Philistines and their neighbors throughout the Iron Age.

## Appendix: List of objects presented in figures with archaeological data on unpublished items

All items are ceramic unless noted otherwise; MC = Ashkelon material culture number; # = Tel Mique-Ekron object number; *Figurines* = Ben-Shlomo and Press 2009; *Ashdod VI* = Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2005; Str. = Stratum. Ekron and Ashkelon strata and phases are provisional.

<i>Fig.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Publication/archaeological details</i>
3.1	1	Female figurine (Psi)	Ekron	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 1:1/#5080, Hearth 23086, Str. VIB
3.1	2	Female figurine (Psi)	Ekron	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 1:2/#2107, Fill 41022, Str. IVA
3.1	3	Female figurine (Psi)	Ashkelon	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 1:3/ MC53755, 38.84.15L685, Phase 18C
3.1	4	Female figurine (Psi)	Ashkelon	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 1:4/ MC51405, 38.63.63F777, Phase 19
3.1	5	Female figurine (Psi)	Ashdod	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 1:5/ H702/1, Courtyard 5128, Str. XII
3.1	6	Female figurine (Psi)	Ashdod	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 1:6/ M1925, topsoil
3.2	1	Female figurine (Psi)	Ashdod	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 1:7/ H721/1, Courtyard 5128, Str. XII
3.2	2	Female figurine (Psi)	Ashdod	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 1:8/ H1159/1, Room 5134a, Str. X
3.2	3	Female figurine (Psi)	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.62:6/ Str. XI
3.2	4	Female figurine (Psi)	Ashkelon	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 1:9/ MC55659, 38.84.183L693, Phase 18A
3.2	5	Female figurine (Psi)	Ashkelon	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 1:10/ MC44067, 38.64.24L488, Phase 19
3.2	6	Female figurine (Psi)	Ashdod	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 1:11/ S/50, topsoil
3.3		Female figurine (Psi)	Ekron	see fig. 3.1:1
3.4		Female figurine	Ashkelon	see fig. 3.2:5
3.5	1	Figurine head	Ashdod	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 10:1/ H1845/1, Layer 5305, Str. XI
3.5	2	Figurine head	Ekron	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 10:2/#4775, Pit 3121, Str. VIA

3.5	3	Figurine head	Ashkelon	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 10:3/ MC56375, 38.83.14L536, phase 18C
3.5	4	Figurine head	Ekron	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 10:4/#4774, Fill 7073, Str. IVB
3.5	5	Figurine head	Ashkelon	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 10:5/ MC40638, 50.48.435LF151
3.5	6	Figurine head	Ashkelon	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 10:6/ MC52537, 38.84.112L690
3.5	7	Figurine head	Ashkelon	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 10:7/ MC50647, 38.84.52L591, Phase 18C
3.6	1	Miniature figurine	Ekron	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 15:1/#140, Balk 4046
3.6	2	Miniature figurine	Ekron	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 14/#5158, Fill 8085
3.7		Figurine head	Ekron	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 12/#576, Topsoil 26000
3.8	1	Female figurine ('Ashdoda')	Ashdod	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 8:1/ K1295/1, Street 6037, Str. VII–VI
3.8	2	Female figurine ('Ashdoda')	Qasile	Mazar 1986: fig. 6:1/ Str. X
3.8	3	Female figurine ('Ashdoda')	Ashkelon	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 8:3/ MC56867, 38.63.5L759, Phase 17A
3.8	4	Female figurine	Ashkelon	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 8:4/ MC52037, 38.84.4L514, Phase 18A
3.8	5	Figurine head	Ashkelon	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 8:5/ MC54271, 38.83.39L464, Phase 18C
3.8	6	Female figurine	Ekron	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 8:6/#1298, Surface 38017.1, Str. V
3.8	7	Female figurine	Jemmeh	Dothan 1982: fig. 12:1
3.9		'Ashdoda' figurine	Ashdod	Dothan 1971: fig. 91:1/ H230/1, Room 5032, Str. XIB
3.10	1	'Ashdoda' figurine	Ekron	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 5:2/#4895, Balk 3141
3.10	2	'Ashdoda' figurine	Ashkelon	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 5:3/ MC50559, 38.84.73L496, Phase 18A
3.10	3	'Ashdoda' figurine	Ashkelon	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 5:4/ MC44919, 50.58.22L318, Phase 7
3.10	4	'Ashdoda' figurine	Ashkelon	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 5:5/ MC53100, 38.84.183L693, Phase 18A
3.10	5	'Ashdoda' figurine	Ashkelon	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 5:6/ MC45403, 2.65.12L5, Phase 8
3.10	6	'Ashdoda' figurine	Ekron	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 5:7/#3949, Surface 23027, Str. IVB
3.10	7	'Ashdoda' figurine	Ekron	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 5:8/#3948, Surface 7035, Str. IV
3.11		'Ashdoda' figurine	Ashkelon	see fig. 10:2
3.12		Krater	Ashkelon	Stager, Schloen and Master 2008: fig. 15:40
3.13	1	Pottery sherd	Ashkelon	Wachsmann 2000: fig. 6.29
3.13	2	Pottery sherd	Ekron	Dothan and Zukerman 2004: fig. 35:10/ Str. VIIA

3.14		Cylinder seal (stone)	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.66/ Str. XI
3.15	1	Anthropomorphic vessel	Qasile	Mazar 1980: fig. 18/ Str. XI
3.15	2	Anthropomorphic vessel	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2006a: fig. 1.33:10/#6585, Surface 28110, Str. III
3.15	3	Anthropomorphic vessel	Ashdod	Dothan 1971: fig. 65:6
3.15	4	Anthropomorphic stand	Ashdod	Dothan and Porath 1982: fig. 25:3/ Str. VII
3.15	5	Flask	Ekron	#5011, Debris 8072, Str. VIA
3.16		Pottery vessels	Gath	Maeir 2007: fig. 1
3.17		Phallus(?) (limestone)	Ekron	#6190, Fill 27080, Str. VIB
3.18		'Musicians' stand'	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.76
3.19		'Musicians' stand'	Ashdod	
3.20		Cultic stand	Qasile	Mazar 1980: fig. 23/ Str. X
3.21	1	Figurine head	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.103:3/ Str. VII
3.21	2	Figurine head	Ashdod	Dothan 1971: fig. 62:8
3.21	3	Figurine head	Ashdod	Dothan 1971: fig. 62:4
3.21	4	Figurine head	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.115:7
3.21	5	Figurine head	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.115:10
3.21	6	Figurine head	Ashkelon	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 15:2/ MC32007, 38.64.510LF700
3.22	1	Figurine	Ashdod	Dothan 1971: fig. 62:1
3.22	2	Stamp seal (stone)	Ashdod	Dothan 1971: fig. 76:1
3.23	1	Figurine head	Gezer	Dothan 1982: Chapter 4, fig. 1:2
3.23	2	Figurine head	Gath	Dothan 1982: Chapter 4, fig. 5
3.24		Cultic stand	Yavneh	Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 2006-1036
3.25		Cultic stand	Yavneh	Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 2006-1022
3.26		Cultic stand	Yavneh	Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 2006-1046
3.27		Cultic stand	Yavneh	Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 2006-1000
3.28		Cultic stand	Yavneh	Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 2006-1040
3.29		Cultic stand	Yavneh	Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 2006-998
3.30	1	Linchpin (bronze)	Ekron	Dothan 1993: fig. 2
3.30	2	Linchpin (bronze)	Ashkelon	Stager, Schloen and Master 2008: fig. 15:81
3.31	1	Stamp seal (stone)	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.41:2/ Str. XII
3.31	2	Sealing	Ashdod	Dothan and Porath 1993: fig. 38:2/ Str. XII
3.31	3	Stamp seal (stone)	Ashdod	Dothan and Porath 1993: fig. 36:9/ Str. XII
3.31	4	Stamp seal (stone)	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.67/ Str. XI
3.32		Figurine	Gath	Maeir 2008b: fig. 2
3.33	1	Plaque figurine	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.96:5/ Str. IX–VIII



3.33	2	Plaque figurine	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.96:4/ Str. IX–VIII
3.33	3	Plaque figurine	Ashdod	Dothan 1971: fig. 65:1
3.34	1	Plaque figurine	Ashkelon	Press 2007: fig. 9:1
3.34	2	Plaque figurine	Ekron	#1250, Debris 7004, Str. IA
3.35	1	Hollow figurine	Ashkelon	Press 2007: fig. 7:4
3.35	2	Hollow figurine	Ekron	Gitin 2003: fig. 4/#7309
3.35	3	Hollow figurine	Ashdod	Dothan 1971: fig. 65:4
3.36		Pillar figurine	Gath	---
3.37		Mask	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.87/Str. X–IX
3.38		Ivory head	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 10
3.39	1	Stamp seal (stone)	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2006c: fig. 15
3.39	2	Stamp seal (stone)	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2006c: fig. 14
3.40	1	Sealing	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2006c: fig. 1
3.40	2	Sealing	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2006c: fig. 4
3.41	1	Sealing	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2006c: fig. 2
3.41	2	Sealing	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2006c: fig. 3
3.42		Silver pendant	Ekron	Dothan and Gitin 2008: 1956
3.43		Ivory inlay	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 4
3.44		Silver and gold bowl	Tanis	Keimer 1952: fig. 2
3.45		Cosmetic spoon (stone)	Ekron	#3392, Surface 3048, Stratum IIA
3.46		Ivory inlay	Far‘ah (S)	Petrie 1930: pl. 55
3.47	1	Ivory inlay	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 6:1
3.47	2	Ivory inlay	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 6:2
3.47	3	Ivory inlay	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 6:3
3.47	4	Ivory inlay	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 6:4
3.48		Detail of ivory statue	Ekron	Stern 2001: fig. I.97
3.49	1	Sealing	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2006c: fig. 8
3.49	2	Sealing	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2006c: fig. 12
3.49	3	Seal (faience)	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2006c: fig. 16
3.49	4	Seal (faience)	Ekron	#2043, Debris 7002, Str. IB
3.49	5	Seal (faience)	Ekron	#2057, Surface 7011p, Str. IB
3.49	6	Amulet (faience)	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.41:1/ Str. XII
3.50		Wall relief	Medinet Habu	After Mazar 1992
3.51		Wall relief	Nimrud	Barnet and Falkner 1962: pl. 92
3.52	1	Bovine figurine	Ekron	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 16:1/#6646, Fill 69008, Str. VII
3.52	2	Bovine figurine	Ekron	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 16:2/#196, Surface 4061, Str. VIIA
3.52	3	Bovine figurine	Ekron	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 16:3/#1364, Fill 2132.1, Str. VI

3.53	1	Bovine figurine	Ekron	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 16:4/#620, Fill 4109, Str. VIB
3.53	2	Bovine figurine	Ekron	<i>Figurines</i> : fig. 18/#1739, Surface 37018, Str. VI
3.53	3	Bovine figurine	Ekron	#1471, Cleaning 4137
3.53	4	Bovine figurine	Ekron	#109, Surface 4058
3.54		Ivory Pyxis lid	Ekron	Dothan 2003b: fig. 11
3.55	1	Bovine(?) vessel	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2008a: fig. 2:1/#4694, Fill 23075, Str. VC
3.55	2	Bovine vessel	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2008a: fig. 2:2/#11450, Fill 11361, Str. VIA
3.55	3	Kernos bowl	Ekron	after Dothan 1982: fig. 4
3.56	1	Bovine vessel	Ekron	#1221, IAA-87-1552
3.56	2	Head spout	Ashdod	Dothan 1971: fig. 68:6/ Str. VIIIB
3.56	3	Head spout	Ekron	#2333, Installation 7008
3.56	4	Head spout	Ekron	#2461, Debris 7019, Str. IV
3.56	5	Head spout	Ekron	#4715, Debris 4029, Str. IIB
3.57	1	Bovine vessel	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2008a: fig. 9:1/#7674, Surface 25097, Str. VIIIB
3.57	2	Bovine vessel	Ashdod	Dothan and Porath 1993: fig. 35:1/ Str. XII
3.57	3	Bovine vessel	Ekron	#3741, Drain 4067, Str. IIB
3.58	1	Bovine vessel	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2008a: fig. 7/#7666, Debris 12014, Str. IB
3.58	2	Bovine vessel	Ekron	#7663, Basin 12032, Str. IB
3.58	3	Bovine vessel	Ekron	#9639, Debris 53006, Str. IB
3.59	1	Bovine vessel	Ekron	#9640, Debris 93005, Str. IB
3.59	2	Bovine vessel	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2008a: fig. 6
3.60	1	Head spout	Ekron	#3969, Surface 29012, Str. IIA
3.60	2	Head spout	Ekron	#3760, Debris 10005, Str. IB
3.60	3	Head spout	Ekron	#5817, Fill 2026, Str. IC
3.60	4	Head spout	Ekron	#4332, Debris 43003, Str. IB
3.60	5	Head spout	Ekron	#3212, Fill 4040, Str. IC
3.60	6	Head spout	Ekron	#1608, Fill 8023, Str. IB
3.61	1	Bovine figurine	Ekron	#4708, Surface 3117.1, Str. VIA
3.61	2	Bovine figurine	Ekron	#7004, Debris 8138, VI–VII
3.61	3	Bovine figurine	Ekron	#7587, Debris 100035, Str. VII
3.61	4	Bovine figurine	Ekron	#325, balk
3.61	5	Bovine figurine	Ekron	#5558, Fill 3154, Str. VII
3.61	6	Bovine figurine	Ekron	#2345, Surface 36046, Str. VI–VII
3.62	1	Bovine figurine	Ekron	#1303, Fill 2123.1
3.62	2	Bovine figurine	Ekron	#1625, Surface 25050p, Str. IVB
3.62	3	Bovine figurine	Ekron	#3379, Fill 41040.1, Str. VIA
3.62	4	Bovine figurine	Ekron	#3491, Fill 23022, Str. IB/C

3.62	5	Bovine figurine	Ekron	#6031, Debris 8101, Str. VA
3.62	6	Bovine figurine	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.36:8/Str. XII
3.62	7	Bovine figurine	Ekron	#1768, Surface 3024.1, Str. IIA
3.63		Cultic stand	Yavneh	Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 2006-1060
3.64		Cultic stand	Yavneh	Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 2006-1070
3.65	1	Libation vessel	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2008a: fig. 9:2/#4661, Surface 27040, Str. VI
3.65	2	Head spout	Ekron	#4723, Debris 25058, Str. VIA
3.65	3	Head spout	Ekron	#9677, Surface 90008.1, Str. IVA
3.65	4	Head spout	Ekron	#7437, Drain 29024, Str. IB
3.66	1	Figurine	Ekron	#176, Surface 5038, Str. VI
3.66	2	Ivory inlay	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 6:5
3.67	1	Figurine	Ashdod	Dothan and Porath 1982: fig. 34:7
3.67	2	Figurine	Ashkelon	Press 2007: fig. 11:7
3.67	3	Figurine	Ekron	#6068, Surface 28083, Str. III
3.67	4	Figurine	Ekron	#6891, Topsoil 61003
3.68	1	Head cup	Qasile	Mazar 1980: fig. 34
3.68	2	Trick vase	Qasile	Mazar 1980: fig. 36
3.69	1	Head cup	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2008a: fig. 8:1/#812, Surface 2101, Str. V
3.69	2	Head cup	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2008a: fig. 8:2/#3821, Fill 3088
3.69	3	Head cup	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2008a: fig. 8:3/#3976, Debris 10014, Str. IB
3.70		Head cup	Gath	Maeir 2006: fig. 4
3.71		Head cup	Gath	Dothan 1982: fig. 7
3.72		Cultic stand	Yavneh	Ziffer and Kletter 2007: 2006-992
3.73		Lion head	Ashdod	Dothan and Porath 1982: fig. 18:2
3.74	1	Krater	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.2:19/ Str. XIII
3.74	2	Krater	Ekron	Dothan and Zukerman 2004: fig. 19:1
3.74	3	Krater	Ekron	Killebrew 1998: fig. 10:17/ Str. VI
3.74	4	Krater	Ekron	Dothan and Zukerman 2004: fig. 6:14
3.74	5	Stirrup jar	Ekron	Dothan and Zukerman 2004: fig. 31:3/ Str. IV
3.74	6	Sherd	Ekron	Dothan and Zukerman 2004: fig. 35:8
3.75	1	Krater	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.47:9/ Str. XI
3.75	2	Krater	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.16:1/ Str. XII
3.75	3	Jug	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.56:4/ Str. XI
3.75	4	Sherd	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.52:2/ Str. XI
3.75	5	Jug	‘Eitun	Dothan 1982: fig. 29
3.76	1	Bird askos	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2008a: fig. 1:2
3.76	2	Bird askos	Ekron	#7023, Debris 25115, Str. VIIA
3.77	1	Bird rattle	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.36:1/ Str. XII

3.77	2	Bird rattle	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2008a: fig. 4/#6402, Installation 28092, Str. VC
3.77	3	Bird rattle	Gezer	After Dothan 1982: fig. 1:1
3.77	4	Head spout	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2008a: fig. 3/#2322, Fill 39011
3.78	1	Bird vessel	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2008a: fig. 5:2/#7198, Debris 78007, Str. IB
3.78	2	Krater	Ekron	#4495, Debris 42022, Str. IB/C
3.78	3	Figurine	Ekron	#7165, Debris 8133, Str. VIB
3.79	1	Bird bowl	Qasile	Mazar 1980: fig. 28
3.79	2	Bird bowl	Ekron	#4742, Kiln 3115, Str. VC
3.79	3	Bird bowl	Ekron	#5787, Silo 27068, Str. VC
3.79	4	Bird bowl	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.62:9
3.79	5	Bird bowl	Ekron	#66, Debris 5003
3.80	1	Ivory box	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 12:1
3.80	2	Ivory box	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 12:2
3.80	3	Ivory box	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 12:3
3.81		Hedgehog vessel	Ekron	Dothan 1998a: pl. 4:1
3.82		Kernos	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2008a: fig. 10/#652, Surface 9014p, Str. IVA
3.83	1	Seal (stone)	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo 2006c: fig. 13
3.83	2	Sealing	Ekron	#198, Fill 16010
3.83	3	Ivory handle	Ashdod	Dothan and Porath 1982: fig. 25:1
3.83	4	Head spout	Ekron	#3890, Debris 27003, Str. IB
3.84	1	Head spout	Ekron	#2247, Surface 8034p, Str. VB
3.84	2	Head spout	Ekron	#3362, Street 3077.1, Str. III
3.84	3	Head spout	Ekron	#1556, Debris 11002, Str. IA
3.84	4	Head spout	Ekron	#2227, Surface 3029.1, Str. IIB
3.84	5	Head spout	Ekron	#7438, Fill 29052, Str. IIA
3.84	6	Head spout	Ekron	#1504, Fill 24021p, Str. IB
3.85	1	Figurine	Ekron	#4729, Fill 7071, Str. IVB
3.85	2	Figurine	Ekron	#5159, Fill 8085, Str. IVB
3.85	3	Figurine	Ekron	#764, Wall 15004, VB
3.86	1	Krater	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.11:10
3.86	2	Sherd	Ekron	Dothan and Zukerman 2004: fig. 35:7
3.86	3	Sherd	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.16:7
3.86	4	Sherd	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.16:8
3.86	5	Sherd	Ekron	Dothan, Gitin and Zukerman 2006: fig. 3.36:3
3.87	1	Krater	Ekron	Dothan and Zukerman 2004: fig. 18:8
3.87	2	Krater	Ekron	Dothan and Zukerman 2004: fig. 16:1
3.87	3	Krater	Azor	After Dothan 1982: fig. 10:3
3.87	4	Krater	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.18:8
3.87	5	Jug	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.56:2

3.87	6	Jug	Azor(?)	After Dothan 1982: fig. 48
3.87	7	Chalice	Gath	Maeir and Shai 2006: fig. 7
3.88		Pomegranate vessel	Ekron	Dothan and Ben-Shlomo 2007: fig. 3
3.89	1	Pomegranate vessel	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.61
3.89	2	Pomegranate vessel	Qasile	Mazar 1980: fig. 46:a
3.89	3	Pomegranate vessel	Qasile	Mazar 1980: fig. 46:b
3.89	4	Kernos	Ekron	#4916, Fill 23075, VC
3.89	5	Kernos	Gezer	After Dothan 1982: fig. 1:6
3.89	6	Composite vessel	Qasile	Mazar 1980: fig. 37
3.89	7	Ivory pomegranate	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 15:4
3.90	1	Bowl	Ekron	Dothan and Zukerman 2004: fig. 8:7
3.90	2	Bowl	Ekron	Dothan and Zukerman 2004: fig. 8:12
3.90	3	Bowl	Ashkelon	Dothan 1982: fig. 3:1
3.90	4	Krater	Ekron	Dothan and Zukerman 2004: fig. 17:2
3.90	5	Krater	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.11:7
3.90	6	Sherd	Ekron	Dothan and Zukerman 2004: fig. 35:10
3.90	7	Bowl	Ashkelon	After Dothan 1982: fig. 10:2
3.90	8	Jug	Ashdod	<i>Ashdod VI</i> : fig. 3.52:5
3.91	1	Ivory inlay	Ashdod	Dothan and Porath 1993: fig. 38:6
3.91	2	Ivory handle	Ashdod	Dothan and Porath 1993: fig. 38:1
3.91	3	Ivory Pyxis lid	Ekron	Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006: fig. 11:2

## Abbreviations

AA	Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Archäologischer Anzeiger
AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
ABSA	Annual of the British School of Archaeology in Athens
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
ANET	Pritchard 1969
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
BA	Biblical Archaeologist
BAR	Biblical Archaeology Review
B.A.R.	British Archaeological Reports
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BIES	Bulletin of the Israel Exploration Society
BSAE	British School of Archaeology in Egypt
EI	Eretz Israel
IAA	Israel Antiquities Authority
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
IES	Israel Exploration Society
JFA	Journal of Field Archaeology
JMA	Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
NEA	Near Eastern Archaeology
NEAEHL	Stern et al. 1993, 2008
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OJA	Oxford Journal of Archaeology
PEF	Palestine Exploration Fund
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
QDAP	Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine
RDAC	Reviews of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus
SMA	Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology
UF	Ugarit-Forschungen
VT	Vetus Testamentum
WA	World Archaeology
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins



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## *Summary*

The Philistines were immigrants from the Aegean region and Cyprus who arrived at the southern coast of Palestine/Israel during the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE. They created a distinct material culture in this region during the Iron Age (ca. 1,200-600 BCE). This book presents and discusses the corpus of iconographic representations attested within the Philistine culture. The assemblage studied includes objects in various media: decoration on pottery, figurative pottery, figurines, ivory carving, glyptics and other items. The figurative style and symbolism represented in the Philistine material culture reflects both the bonds of the Philistines with their Aegean homeland and the ongoing process of interaction with the local host cultures in the southern Levant. Iconography provides an important set of evidence for understanding social, ethnic, religious and ideological aspects of the Philistine society in relation to its Eastern Mediterranean and Levantine neighbors.